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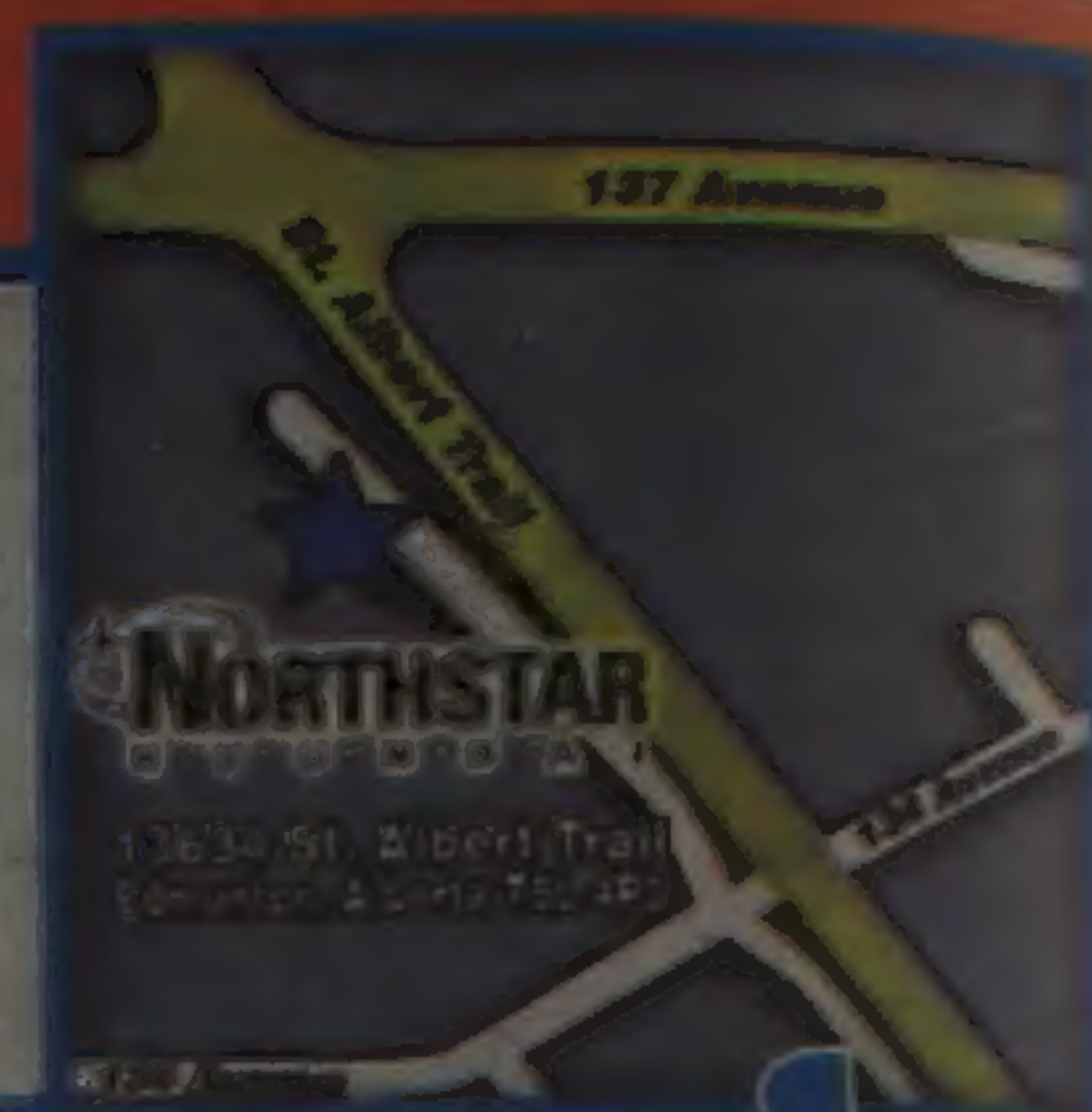
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ON THE COVER



WILLKOMMEN IN SPREEPARK / 34

"I know it sounds goofy and arty, but culture and art are as important now as they've ever been. We're so alienated from our community ... why not go watch people you know—people who live and work here? The more global we become, the more local we have to support. Theatre falls into that, too."—Michelle Kennedy, director, on the collaboration at the heart of *Willkommen in Spreepark*.

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MINING MISERY / 7

"In Marmato, when a mine is bought, it is closed. Mills are bought and destroyed. The local economy is going backwards, and for the first time, people are unemployed. Hunger, prostitution and poverty are all that is left. Basically, this is a war on small miners." —Diego Ruiz, representative of the Colombian Federation of Small Miners, on the impacts of a Canadian mining company in Colombia.

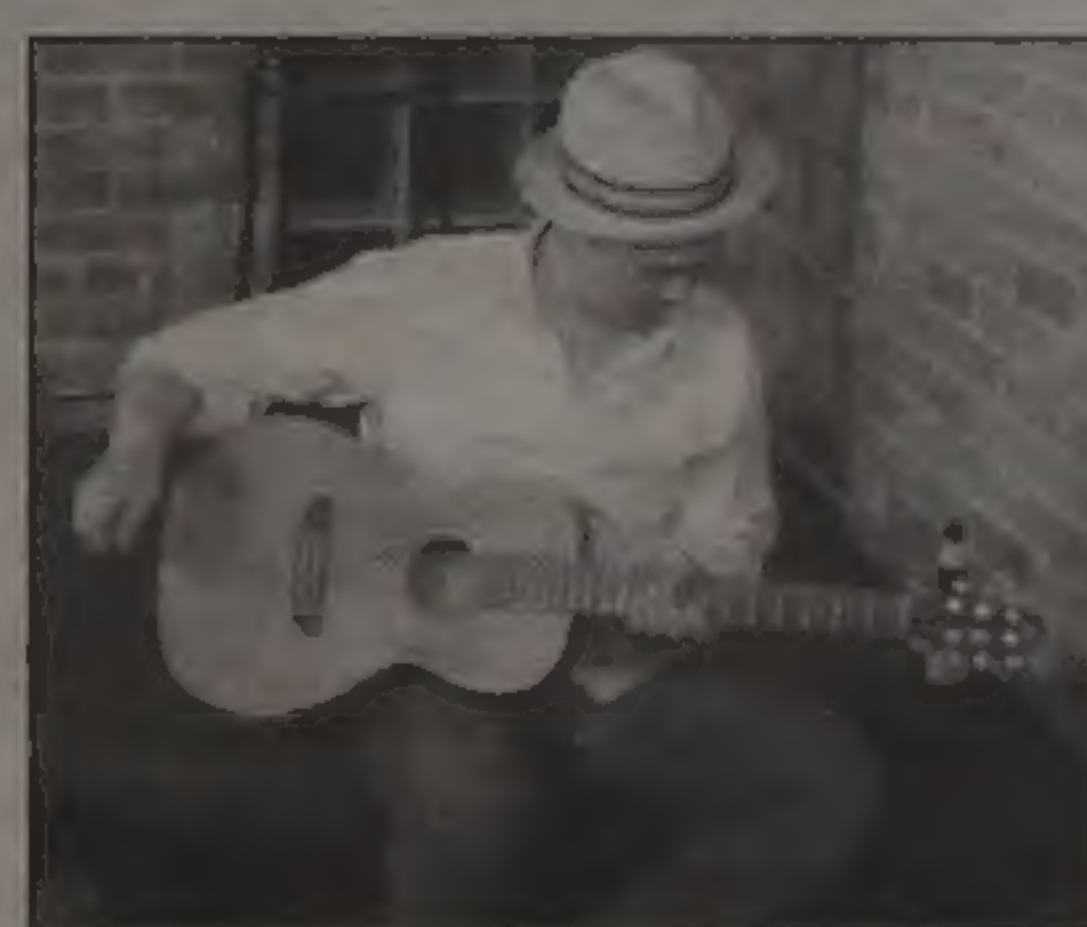
FILM



CJ / 44

"But Chow soon chews up and spits out any other Spielberg or Disney elements, quickly making the film his own. He does so through a curious, often compelling mix of threat and safety—even the poop jokes here are more realistically awful and yet more cartoonishly laughable." —Brian Gibson, critic, on Stephen Chow's foray into family comedy.

MUSIC



AYLA BROOK / 50

"You go, 'Well, that's the sound in the room.' A lot of my favourite records are that way, you can hear the creaks, you're drawn in more because you hear those extra things and you realize, 'Oh yeah, this actually happened.'" —Ayla Brook, songwriter, on the old-time sound of his new album.

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Seeking Members for Trails, Paths and Routes Advisory Committee

The City of Edmonton Trails, Paths and Routes Advisory Committee (TPRAC) is receiving applications for three new members. TPRAC works towards the enhancement of Edmonton's environment for walking, running, cycling, inline skating and travel by other active modes.

The TPRAC provides City of Edmonton civic administration with advice on plans, maintenance and projects affecting multi-use trails and non motorised transport on sidewalks and cycling routes throughout the entire city. The committee also initiates projects to bring forward pertinent issues.

Committee members represent a broad range of users, ages and abilities from different areas of the city. Meetings are every second month, usually Downtown on Mondays at 5:30 p.m.

To apply, send contact information and a page or two explaining your interest in Edmonton's trails, paths and routes. Also outline what skills or experiences you can bring to the committee. Applications can be sent to: tprac@edmonton.ca.

Deadline for applications is **May 28, 2008**.

For more information, phone **496-2615** or see www.edmonton.ca/cycling > **Current Initiatives > TPRAC**

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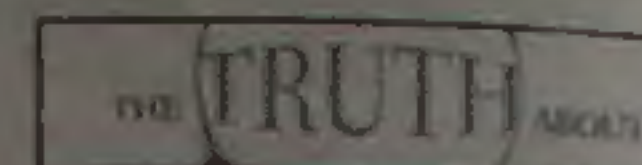
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Get smart on gas prices

JIT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

Ah, summer in Edmonton. Patios are open, the sun is shining and thousands of Edmontonians are cycling and walking throughout the city. Of course, hundreds of thousands are dealing with those two other sure signs of the season: construction-induced gridlock and high gas prices.

If you're a car-dependent Edmontonian—which, according to Statistics Canada, 78 per cent of us—the May long weekend is an annual shock to the wallet rich promises to continue all summer long. Checking historical gas prices in the city reveals the obvious: the affordability of driving is only getting worse.

So the May 16 speech by transportation expert Todd Litman of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute to a packed room of Edmonton municipal planners, transportation engineers, transit representatives, public health professionals, and a handful of city councillors came at an auspicious time.

Litman presented a compelling argument that isolated measures to ameliorate elements of our car-dependent transportation woes—encouraging people to buy hybrids in response to high gas prices or widening roads to ease traffic congestion, for example—are simply inadequate half-measures.

What is needed, Litman argued, is an integrated approach that views urban sustainability as the intersection of environmental, social and economic objectives to move from a planning model that views mobility—mostly by car—as its primary objective to one that puts accessibility at the centre of how we develop a city. What that means is shifting focus to building walkable, smart-growth communities with features such as higher density, transportation diversity, traffic calming measures and “urban villages” that offer neighbourhoods an appropriate mix of activities without the need to get into a car. Only through such an integrated approach, according to Litman, can we adequately address interconnected issues such as congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation affordability, public health and community economic development.

Shifting the way we conceptualize cities is obviously a tall order, and will require almost-unheard-of coordination between different departments, sectors and jurisdictions. The good news is that the barriers to realizing such a vision are not technical ones, but conceptual and political ones, meaning they can be overcome. And with every frustrated driver sitting in summer gridlock staring at a sign reading “Regular: \$1.25,” we move a step closer to making it all possible. ▽



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MAIL LETTERS

JUST WHEN A LABOUR INCOME DEBATE COULDN'T GET MORE BORING

A debate about real wages in Canada has filled this letters column ever since *Vue* published Maude Barlow's article on NAFTA ("Renegotiate NAFTA? That sounds like a good idea," Mar 6 - Mar 12, 2008). This debate has, in fact, dragged on far too long.

Prof Dick Beason has finally given us the source of his data—a source that, on brief examination, appears to be genuine, reliable StatsCan data. Using this data (a time series on "Labour Income"), Prof Beason concludes that real average wages in Canada have risen by 20 per cent since 1975.

The problem is that my data are also from StatsCan, and are also genuine and reliable; but this data seems to show that average real wages have been stagnant or declining since 1991. What are we to make of this?

Well, when two sets of data tell different stories, you have to look at the (even more) boring, picky details of what that data is actually measuring. A quick glance at the Statistics Canada "definitions, data sources and methods" web page reveals that "Labour Income"

includes not just wages, but also "directors' fees, bonuses ... and stock options." My data, on the other hand, reports the average hourly wages for workers paid by the hour, which is the way most Canadians get paid.

So my data dovetails pretty well with the period of NAFTA (which came into force in 1994) and describes what has actually happened to the wages of the vast majority of Canadians. Prof Beason's data, by contrast, seems to show the effect of the fat bonuses and stock options offered to corporate management and CEOs. Since CEOs and senior management are also, technically, employees, I accept Beason's correction.

For the record, though, Maude Barlow talked about "real wages" not "real average labour income." She was right. Prof Beason was wrong.

TOM FULLER
 DIRECTOR, PROJECTS
 ALBERTA FEDERATION OF LABOUR

ANCESTRY LIKELY DETERMINES HOW YOU FEEL AFTER YOU BEAT MEAT

I just wanted to say I enjoyed Connie Howard's recent article about meat versus vegetarian diets ("One more for the veggies," May 1 - May 7, 2008). I think this whole one-size-fits-all approach is very limiting.

Personally, going (almost) veg has led to the healthiest and strongest time of

my life. I have actually added muscle, lost fat I didn't even know I had (I've always been somewhat skinny), and I've just felt healthier and more energetic in general. I also tend to snack a lot more and eat smaller meals. I never really changed my diet, I just stopped buying meat save for seafood.

I wonder though, if all this doesn't have a direct bearing on our ancestry. Obviously some people's ancestors would have had a meat-based diet, such as the Inuit. Others, however, may have subsisted mainly on fruits and vegetables, such as the Native peoples of the Pacific Northwest. My own ancestry is Frisian, a group of people who have lived in northwestern Europe for thousands of years and who are now confined to northwestern Germany and Holland. My ancestors had a diet rich in fish and vegetables and fruit, but which rarely consisted of domesticated meats like beef and pork. So it just makes sense that my own metabolism prefers such a diet. I'd love to see a study on that though, wouldn't you?

DAVE ZYLSTRA

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

Canadian corporation mining misery in Colombia

RESIDENTS OF MARMATO FACE POVERTY, RELOCATION IN FACE OF LAND GRABS AND OPEN-PIT GOLD MINE

MICHAEL O TUATHAIL / otuathail@vuweekly.com

"Marmato: your coveted gold is the source of riches for strangers—and the cause of misery for yourselves." —Old Marmateño saying

In Marmato, a small mining town clinging to the side of El Burro, a mountain in the Colombian Andes, "los canadienses" are the talk of the town's 8000 residents.

For over 500 years small-scale "subsistence" gold mining formed Marmato into a distinct community that made its living, traditions and legends deep in the dank corridors of the mines.

But five years ago the community's roots were shaken when, through its subsidiary Mineras de Caldas, Toronto-based Colombia Goldfields began buying out local miners and consolidating ownership of El Burro, provoking what many in the community call the "economic forced displacement" of Marmato.

Yamil Amar Cataño, a miner and president of the Marmato Pro-Defence Committee, a grassroots organization opposed to the company's plans, can still remember the impact when the company first arrived in Marmato.

"[The miners] had never seen so much money in one place," he recalls. "They only know pesos. The dollars flashed in their faces were part of a plan to destabilize the community."

It is a plan which has proven successful. The company has already acquired 95 per cent of legal mines in the Zona Alta, an area dedicated since the '50s to small-scale mining, as well as the medium-sized operation at the base of El Burro. Such large-scale acquisitions are unprecedented in Marmato, and have had a profound impact on the community, which has long depended on small-scale mining for its economic well-being.

"In Marmato, when a mine is bought, it is closed. Mills are bought and destroyed," explains Diego Ruiz, a lawyer, miner and representative of the Colombian Federation of Small Miners (FENAMICOL). "The local economy is going backwards, and for the first time, people are unemployed. Hunger, prostitution and poverty are all that is left. Basically, this is a war on small miners."

SINCE THE SPANISH CONQUEST, the pursuit of Latin America's mineral

NEWS MINING

riches has figured decisively in the region's history, social relations and political fate. More recently—starting in the 1990s—a wave of free-market economic reforms opened many countries to increased levels of foreign investment and there was a sharp increase in mining industry activity in the region, the Canadian share of which had increased 35 per cent by 2004, making Canadian companies by far the biggest players in mining.

Colombia—rich in oil, coal, gold and emeralds—is also notorious for violence often associated with armed groups seeking control of the country's abundant resources. The Colombian government under President Álvaro Uribe Vélez has promoted large-scale mining projects, which it argues brings foreign investment to a country where gross economic inequality and the ever-thriving drug economy fuel an armed conflict that has historically kept many investors away.

Uribe's pro-business legislation and the negotiation of multiple free trade agreements have made him the champion of neoliberal reformers in Latin America. He has worked hard to portray to international investors and the world that he has the leftist guerrillas of the FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, on the run and the right-wing paramilitary groups tamed. The idea is to curb the violence in the country to "acceptable" levels.

Canadian multinationals and the Harper government have heard that message loud and clear. Last July, Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Colombia, pledging Canada's support for Uribe and announcing the beginning of free trade talks, seen as part of Canada's "re-engagement in the Americas," a major foreign policy priority.

Economic partnerships with Uribe's Colombia are controversial—as was shown in March when the US Congress froze the ratification of a free trade agreement with Colombia—and there are undisputed problems.

Colombia remains the most dangerous place in the world for trade unionists. To date, 65 of Uribe's allies in the Colombian Congress are being investigated for links to right-wing



paramilitary death squads, a scandal known in Colombia as "para-politica." Of that number, 29 are currently in jail for proven links. The scandal has touched everyone around the president but not Uribe himself.

The *LA Times* reports that extrajudicial executions, or "false positives," whereby civilians murdered by the army are subsequently dressed as guerrilla fighters in order to "gain points," are on the rise. The armed conflict and the situation of the nearly four million displaced Colombians have been described by the United Nations as "the biggest humanitarian crisis in the Western Hemisphere."

While in Bogotá, Prime Minister Harper spoke of Canadian investment possibly leading to peace, and rebuffed critics of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

"We're not going to say, 'Fix all your social and human rights problems, and only then will we engage in trade relations with you,'" Harper said during his visit. "That's a ridiculous position."

CANADIAN COMPANIES are finding in Colombia a yet-untapped bonanza of resources which, combined with agreeable fiscal reforms and a heightening of state and state-allied armed presence in the countryside, make the risk of popular opposition to megaprojects a minor concern.

"The Uribe 'stability' is the most-cited reason for moving in now," says Jamie Kneen of the Ottawa-based industry watchdog Mining Watch Canada. "[Along] with booming commodity prices and a shortage of development projects."

Coming to the aid of Canadian mining companies in Latin America is often the Canadian government. "[The government] explicitly supports mining investment as a development tool," says Kneen. "Based on what evidence, we don't know."

In 2001, Colombia enacted the new Mining Code, but failed to consult with indigenous, peasant and Afro-Colombian communities as required by international agreements to which Colombia is a signatory.

Prior to ratification, however, the Mining Code received technical and financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), who contracted for assistance an industry-funded think-tank based at the University of Calgary, the Canadian Energy Research Institute (CERI).

Critics argue that the result was a controversial code with weakened labour and environmental safeguards and generous breaks for foreign investors, including four per cent royalty rates.

"What is really at issue is the model of development being promoted [by CIDA]," states Kneen. "[The question is] whether facilitating foreign investment is more important than protecting and building on local economies, never mind human rights, labour rights and environmental protections."

ON THE GROUND in Colombia, one can sense the distance between the view of rural mining communities and those of Bogotá, Ottawa and El Street.

Colombia Goldfields, who did not respond to repeated requests by the author for comment, declares on its website that it is "rediscovering the land of golden mountain" through exploration projects that have revealed at least 5.3 million ounces (over 160 tonnes) of gold in the Marmato area.

According to its own press releases, the company's consolidation of land and exploration projects will convert Marmato into "a world-class asset" and their "latest success story."

But it is a story which has largely ignored the impacts on the community.

"The company has a right to invest in Marmato," Ruiz concedes. "But the community also has rights. The company and the government have ignored [the social problems associated with unemployment]. The community is left to deal with that on its own."

Having no prior exploitation experience itself, many suspect that Colombia Goldfields will sell its Marmato properties off to a larger company for exploitation. The method of choice for multinational mining companies is often "open-pit," a process that at Marmato would remove "between 30,000 and 60,000 tonnes of earth daily."

CONTINUES ON PAGE 424

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Politicians, judges and a general make for political crisis in Pakistan

DYER STRAIGHT

Gwynne Dyer
gwynne@vueweekly.com

want to inform the entire nation that Mon, May 12, 2008, all deposed judges will be restored," Nawaz Sharif told journalists in Lahore after a crisis meeting with the head of the other major party in Pakistan's governing coalition, Asif Zardari. But it didn't happen, so on May 13 Sharif pulled all nine ministers of his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party out of the government.

This was not just a minor spat between politicians. It heralds a major crisis in the country that is America's most important ally in the Bush administration's "war on terror," and the crisis is precisely about the huge influence that the United States exercises in Pakistan.

The 60 deposed judges at the centre of a dispute were dismissed last November by the country's military dictator, General Pervez Musharraf. All of them were really fired for defying his rule, and the Supreme Court judges among them in particular for being about to deliver a ruling that would have declared Musharraf's "election" as president the previous month illegal.

The constitution said that no serving military officer could run for president, but Musharraf was unwilling to take off his uniform until he had won the "election" in parliament and been confirmed in the presi-

dency. If the Supreme Court was going to rule against that manoeuvre, then the disobedient judges would just have to be removed. But the strategy that Musharraf and the United States had created to keep him in power collapsed when Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in December.

The plan was that Musharraf, by now a deeply unpopular figure in Pakistan, would allow a controlled restoration of democracy in which another close American ally, Benazir Bhutto, would return from exile and become prime minister. For historical reasons her Pakistan People's Party stood a good chance of winning a free election. Afterwards, she would work together with Musharraf, now a duly elected civilian president, who would step back from the limelight but still exercise ultimate control over the military.

The strategy might have succeeded if Benazir Bhutto had not been killed in December, but much of the PPP's popularity was really reflex loyalty to the Bhutto family. Bhutto's successor as party leader, her husband Asif Zardari, was a deeply controversial figure who could not mobilize popular support in the same way.

The PPP emerged as the largest single party when the parliamentary elections, postponed because of Bhutto's death, were finally held in February, but it did not win enough seats to form a government on its own. It had to make a coalition with the second-largest party, Nawaz Sharif's PML-N, which had no secret understandings with the United States or Musharraf.



SHARIF WAS the elected prime minister whom Musharraf overthrew in his 1999 coup, and he is unyielding in his opposition

to the general staying in office as president. When the two parties formed a coalition government two months ago, they agreed that the judges who were unjustly dismissed by Musharraf would have to be reinstated, but it turns out that they didn't mean quite the same thing by it.

Sharif understood it to mean that the judges would get their old jobs back—whereupon the Supreme Court would deliver the ruling on the legality of Musharraf's "election" as president that they were fired to forestall last October. Goodbye Musharraf (unless the army stages another coup to save him, which seems unlikely at this stage).

Zardari, on the other hand, remains loyal to his late wife's deal with Musharraf, and talks about restoring the deposed judges—but not necessarily to their old jobs, and only as part of a package that also restricts their powers. In other words, they would not be able to pull the plug on Musharraf. All the influence of the United States, of course, is behind Zardari and the PPP.

The first deadline to restore the judges was missed on Apr 30. The second passed without any government action on May 12, and the following day Nawaz Sharif pulled his party out of the governing coalition, which then

lost its majority in parliament. He says he may continue to vote with the PPP on an issue-by-issue basis, but what seemed to be a remarkably smooth return to democracy has been seriously destabilized.

The Bush administration's obsession with saving Musharraf is wrong not just because it is sabotaging Pakistani democracy, but because he does not really serve US interests in the region any more.

Washington values Musharraf because he has gone along with the US strategy of aggressively pursuing "militants" and "extremists" in the Pashtun-speaking regions along the Pakistani-Afghan border. It has repaid him with large amounts of foreign aid and unfailing political support. But it was precisely that strategy that made Musharraf the least popular public figure in Pakistan, and it manufactures far more enemies of the United States (and of the Pakistani and Afghan governments) than it eliminates.

It really is time for Washington to drop both him and the strategy. ▽

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in Vue Weekly.

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Get madder than Mel and say, 'I'm not going to take it anymore'

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vancouverweekly.com

If there is one indisputable claim that Mel Hurtig can make, it's that he's a dedicated Canadian.

In the '80s, he published *The Canadian Encyclopedia* to document Canada's history, personalities and accomplishments and has subsequently penned a half-dozen books, including *The Betrayal of Canada* and *The Vanishing Country*, to shed light on what he saw as threats to its future.

As a founding member of the Committee for an Independent Canada, the Council of Canadians and the short-lived National Party, Hurtig has spent more than a generation pushing to maintain economic and political sovereignty in the face of free trade agreements and business leaders and politicians bent on greater integration with our imposing southern neighbour.

Given Hurtig's numerous efforts at advancing the cause of Canadian nationalism and sovereignty, it's understandable that he's a little upset as he looks back and surveys the success, or lack thereof, of his life's work. Such is the somewhat depressing task that Hurtig undertakes in his latest book, *The Truth About Canada*.

Actually, by his own admission, he's not just upset, he's seriously pissed off about the direction that the country has been heading in since the 1980s. And he wants you to be pissed off too, writing in the book's preface, "I hope you will be angry after reading

BOOKS

THE TRUTH ABOUT CANADA
BY MEL HURTIG
MCCLELLAND & STEWART
396 PP, \$34.99

The Truth About Canada, very angry. Angry at greedy, hypocritical, intentionally misleading corporate executives, and angry at the remarkably inept politicians who have allowed a small and wealthy plutocracy to sell out our country and our destiny for their own selfish motives."

Strong words, to be sure, but Hurtig follows them up by spending almost 400 pages documenting in excruciating detail and frustrated tone just how far Canada has slipped from its self-perceived ideal of being a just and internationally admired nation.

IN PAGE AFTER PAGE of statistics and measures, Hurtig both compares Canada to itself—showing the monumental shifts in economics, social measures and culture which have occurred under Prime Ministers Mulroney, Chrétien, Martin and Harper—and to the other developed nations of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

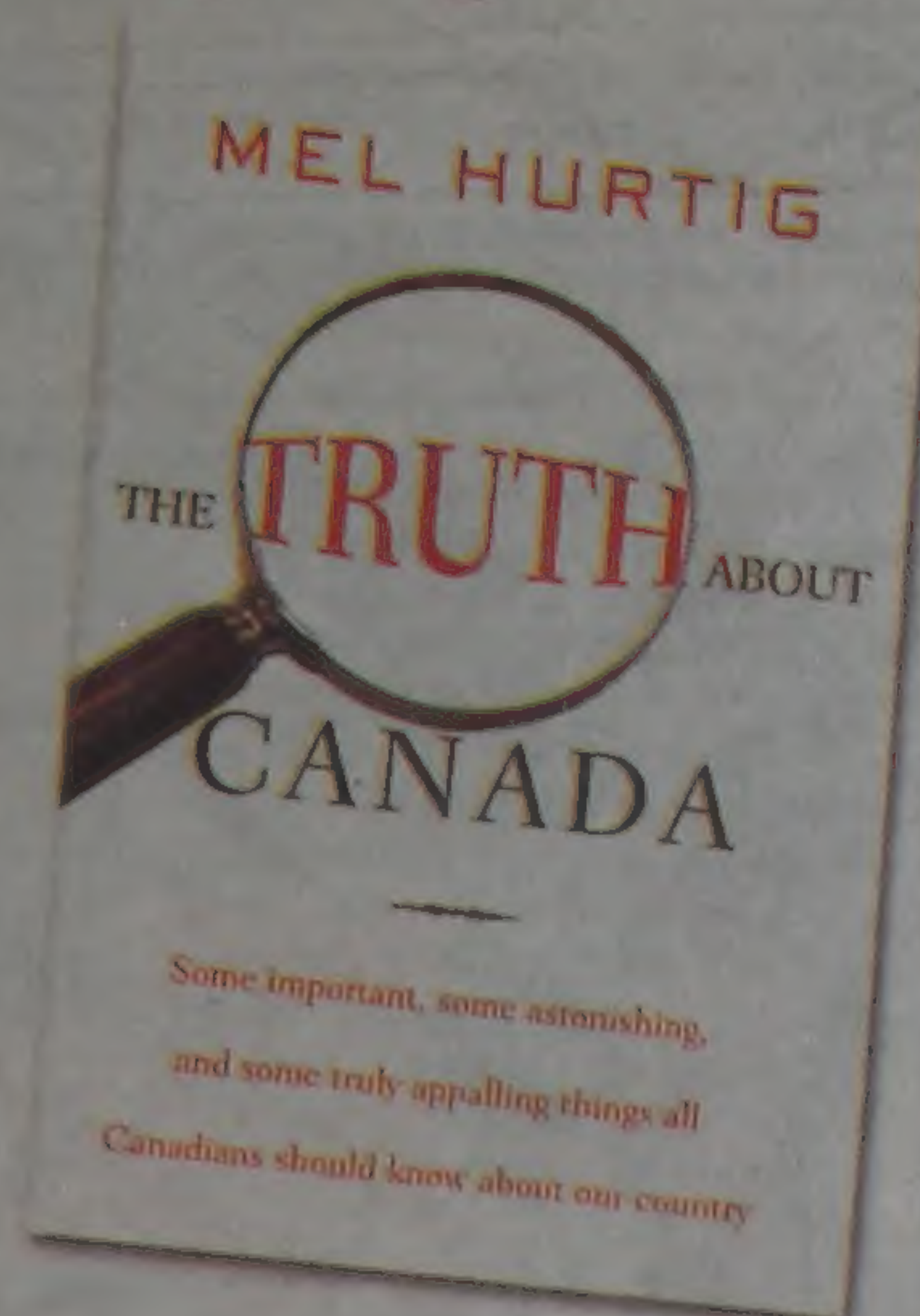
On health care, Hurtig reveals that Canada now ranks 54th in the world in the number of physicians relative to population—below not only countries one would expect like Norway and

Sweden, but also Kazakhstan, Armenia, Uruguay and a host of others.

On child poverty, he points out that despite a 1989 House of Commons pledge to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000, the number of Canadian children living in poverty has gone from 15.1 per cent at the time of the federal vow to 17.7 per cent in 2004.

On the tattered Canadian social safety net, he shows that when it was still called Unemployment Insurance in 1980, 86 per cent of unemployed workers received assistance from the program, dropping to just 40 per cent today as the re-branded Employment Insurance program.

Hurtig also dispenses with the myth of an equitable Canada, using Statistics Canada data to show that between 1984 and 2005 only the wealthiest 10 per cent of Canadians increased their share of wealth. In 2005, the richest 40 per cent of Canadians owned 89.4 per cent of wealth in the country and the bottom 40 per cent shared just 2.4 per cent.



MORE THAN just a compiler of numbers, Hurtig pulls no punches in pointing fingers at who he sees as the guilty parties in all of this. He skewers the failure of successive governments since the '80s and their business allies, including the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, well-funded right wing think-tanks like the CD Howe and Fraser Institutes, along with the corporate media, which he says has turned a blind eye to what has been happening. Hurtig also spends

considerable space focusing on what he sees as the driving force behind Canada's decline: the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement (which he calls "the most colossal con job in Canadian history as well as NAFTA and the rest of the alphabet soup of free trade agreements).

Where *The Truth About Canada* comes up short is its relative dearth of prescriptions for what Canadians can do with their newfound anger, only devoting a chapter to the urgent need for electoral reform, which he says has been his "most important priority" for the past 30 years and offering a brief call for greater political activism. Canadians and grassroots democratic involvement to stop the latest threat to sovereignty, the Security and Prosperity Partnership.

But in fairness, at 75 Hurtig shouldn't be expected to be at the front of any barricades, and if everyone who reads his book gets as angry as Hurtig did writing it, things will be pre-crowded up there on the frontlines anyway. ▼

Mel Hurtig will be in Edmonton to discuss *The Truth About Canada* on Thursday, May 22 (7 pm) at the Old Timer's Cafe (9430 Scona Road). Admission is free.

TOP 10 RINGTONES

- 1) Lollipop Lil Wayne
- 2) Take A Bow Rihanna
- 3) Dangerous feat. Akon Kardinal Offishall
- 4) Bleeding Love Leona Lewis
- 5) Break The Ice Britney Spears
- 6) Touch My Body Mariah Carey
- 7) 4 Minutes Madonna
- 8) Low Flo Rida
- 9) Like Me Girlicious
- 10) No Air duet Feat. Chris Brown Jordin Sparks

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Ignore sleight of hand and pay attention to the man behind the curtain

RICARDO ACUÑA / calberta.ca/parkland

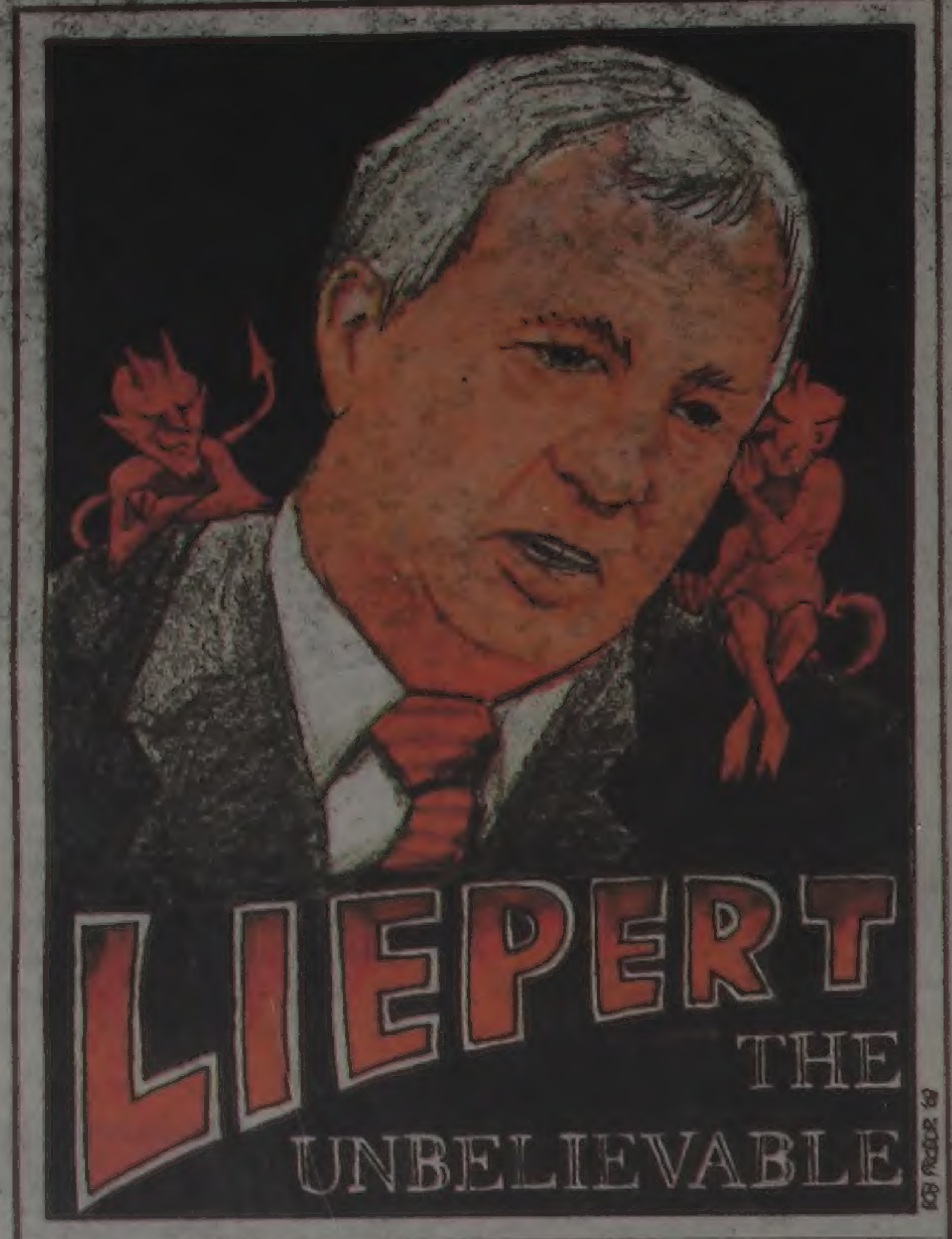
Whether you are talking about a magic trick, an illusion or sleight of hand, the key is the same: the trick will only work if you are able to successfully draw your audience's attention to something other than what you are really doing. It seems though this is a lesson that Health Minister Ron Liepert has learned well.

Last week Mr Liepert announced what will be the first of a year-long line-up of major changes to our health-care system. At first blush the announced plan to combine some of the province's existing health boards into one "superboard" looks harmless enough, and even seems to make sense.

The primary problem with the way health care management and administration has been set up in this province is that the main purpose of the health boards is to divest the government of responsibility and public accountability for our health care system.

Albertans have seen this government use this same tactic with school boards and municipalities. If you create an arms-length body and put it in charge of a major policy area, when things go wrong the government has someone to point its finger at, allowing the government to avoid having to take public responsibility for the problems. Likewise, when government decides to underfund an area, they can simply blame board mismanagement for the short-fall rather than having to deal with the public themselves. It's a classic example of political buck-passing, and the Tories have been perfecting the technique since the Ralph Klein restructurings of the early '90s.

The long-term impact of this type of decentralized board structure, of course, is that at a government will eventually lose completely its ability to manage and direct significant areas of public policy. In Alberta the government has worked so hard to distance itself from the decisions of the



various health boards that they have essentially lost any power they once had to impact strategic changes on the ground.

Thus, my first reaction to Minister Liepert's announced changes to the health care governance structure—if creating one superboard means that the gov-

ernment is finally willing to take back responsibility and become accountable again for our health care system—was that I'm all for it. Unfortunately, however, it soon became evident that there are other goals at play here, and that first-blush reaction went right out the window.

Mr Liepert has suggested repeatedly that there are big changes coming to the health-care system over the course of the next year. Why, then, make such a big deal out of what amounts to a relatively minor change in administrative structure? Is the health board announcement and accompanying ad campaign and media flurry designed to focus public attention away from something more significant in a pay-no-attention-to-the-man-behind-the-curtain kind of way?

THE MINISTER'S CHOICE of interim board members, coupled with his comments to the media in introducing the new board, provide a pretty strong sense of what those more significant changes might be. The seven members appointed to the board are the usual list of Tory and corporate friends who find their way to these sorts of patronage appointments. There's a former MP who also happens to run an insurance brokerage, there's a former president of the TSX Venture Exchange, and the former president of a couple of large engineering firms. There are no health-care professionals and there is no one with academic training in health-care management or health administration. It would make a fabulous board for an engineering or energy corporation, but why have these folks been appointed to the body that is going to take responsibility over our health-care system?

The government's choice for an interim CEO is even more telling. Charlotte Robb is the former CEO of Dynalife Diagnostics (formerly Dynacare Kasper Medical Laboratories or DKML). For those with a short memory, DKML was born as a result of the Klein government's moves in the early 1990s to begin privatizing the health system bit by bit, starting with the medical and diagnostic labs. Charlotte Robb has seen firsthand the amount of money that there is to be made by privatizing health care. Why has a government supposedly committed to

a public system put someone that comes out of privatized health care in charge?

Finally, there is the issue of the minister's comments in relation to the new board. "I don't think government does a good job of running a \$13-billion operation. What we need is a board with people who have governance, private-sector business experience," Mr Liepert said last week. The obvious first question is why we should trust this government with our province's \$37 billion budget, if one of its own ministers has admitted that they don't even have the wherewithal to manage a \$13 billion piece of it.

More importantly, however, is the clear indication that the minister's intent is a very concerted move to a private-sector model for our system. Instead of the public interest and human beings, the minister is starting to speak of bottom lines and share-holders. Our public health-care system, as we have come to know it, is not about profit margins and share value; it is about providing a quality and accessible service to all the people of Alberta.

It is critical that Albertans not be distracted by this move, which amounts to wand-waving, bright lights and a puff of smoke. We must continue to focus on the man behind the curtain and be very wary of which levers he is pulling. He has clearly revealed the intent and direction of the upcoming changes he plans to the system, and it goes contrary to what Albertans have said time and time again they want. Hopefully Albertans can remain focused on the real plan long enough to shut down yet another attempt at privatization before the grand illusion is over and we lose our public system. ▽

Ricardo Acuña is executive director of the Parkland Institute, a non-partisan public policy research institute housed at the University of Alberta.

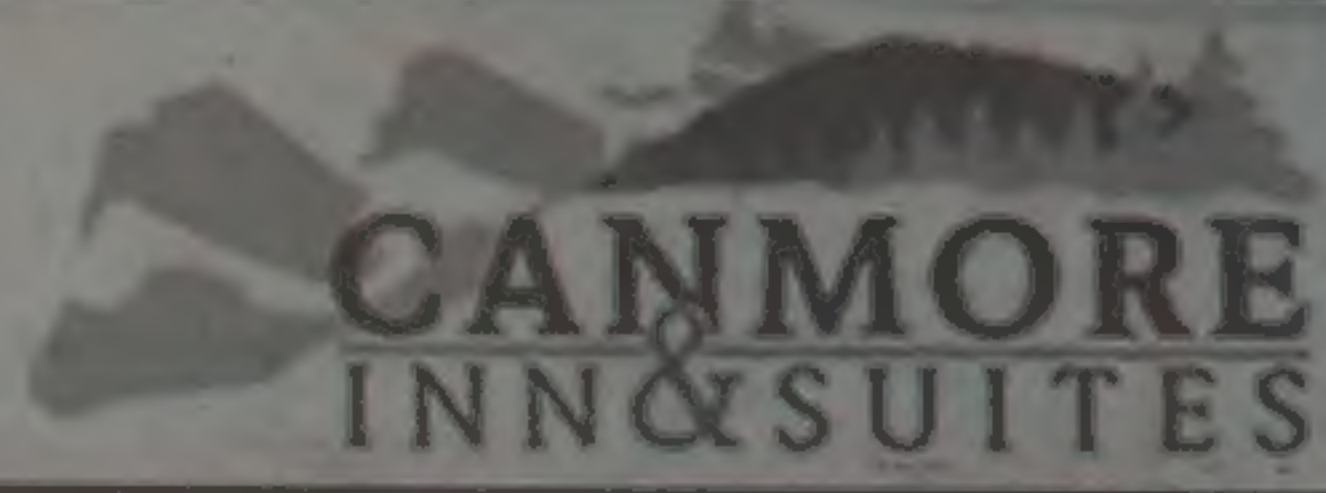
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Wipe-'em-out approach not helping get rid of our cooties

WELL, WELL, WELL
By [illegible]

Having recently been swimming in crystal clear but microbe-laden sea water, and having had my first experience with angry ocean-itch ankles, I got thinking about bugs in relationship to our health again. Ocean microbes are, of course, mostly harmless, but stories about superbugs like MRSA, West Nile or the fungal infection causing deadly pneumonia-like infections for some citizens of Vancouver Island make it easy to become a little cootie-phobic.

But some of us are fairly immune to these things, can be directly exposed and left entirely unharmed, while others get very sick, which points to the idea that the host environment plays a key role.

Understanding this better than we currently do and coming up with new approaches to common infectious diseases is important, to put it mildly—of the tens of thousands of hospital-acquired infections each year, many are now resistant to at least one antibiotic, and some are resistant to all available antibiotics. The old wipe-out approach doesn't seem to be working, and safety trick we'd hoped it would.

It's occurred to me yet again that microbes just might be more determined to survive than we are. And that they were here before we were, and that maybe our hard-hitting pre-emptive war on bugs—with the many vaccines and antibiotics routinely used—is only making things worse. Because, though many bacteria and viruses clearly have the potential to make us ill, many are also very important to our microbiology.

We're the newcomers here, and ungrateful ones at that, with our anti-microbial soaps, disinfectants and medicines. Much of our microbiology—90 per cent, they say—is non-human, meaning bacteria and things, and microbiologists are worried about the disappearance of protective microbes, which our zealous anti-bacterial approach isn't helping.

And for antibiotic and antiviral pills in the presence of serious illness of course, but do we really need them for run-of-the-mill colds and flu and sinus infections? Or as staples in livestock feed? Actually, yes to that second question, thanks to modern dairy practices. The animals apparently

aren't meant to digest a diet of grain, which causes health problems for them, for which they then require medication—these are meds that are unnecessary when cattle are permitted to graze freely.

BUT BACK TO human health issues, not that the livestock issue is unrelated. Aside from the fact that some of us aren't at prime immune function on a diet consisting of primarily grains either, we're deluded if we think we're going to be able to wipe out the bad bugs and not adversely semi-sterilize our biosphere.

For one, microbes will just continue to evolve and share drug-resistant traits and reproduce drug-resistant strains, and we're not keeping up with them. For another, in knocking out nature's built-in checks and balances, we too often create the perfect environment for the bad guys to flourish, as is the case with the post-antibiotic fungi-free-for-all our bodies regularly host.

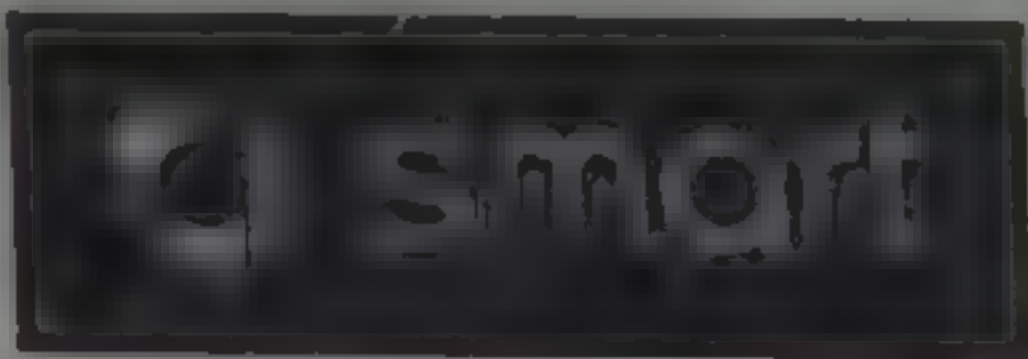
Which is exactly what seems to be happening more and more often in those prone to sinus or ear infections—two or three rounds of meds, but the infections don't go away. The clues lie in the immune function and ecology, and research coming out of the Mayo Clinic challenges the long-held idea that bacteria are the most common cause of sinus infections, and antibiotics the best solution. A study they did in 1999 found 96 per cent of chronic sinus sufferers suffer not from a bacterial infection, but from an immune reaction to a fungus.

But the answer to the problem of chronic infections surely can't lie in a little patience, in a holistic approach that considers the host environment over the pathogen, or at least along with it? Herbs, enzymes and probiotics acting on our bodies' responses to pathogens can be powerful treatments and future preventions, though not of course immediate or fast solutions to long-standing imbalances.

Athletes on probiotic supplements have been found to have substantially shorter and less severe respiratory illness symptoms than those on placebos—maybe because probiotic microorganisms neutralize toxins produced by pathogenic bacteria, train the immune system, prevent growth of harmful microbes, and produce vitamins B, K and a bunch of beneficial enzymes?

Let's hope Health Canada doesn't soon ban these clearly hazardous alternative therapies. ♥

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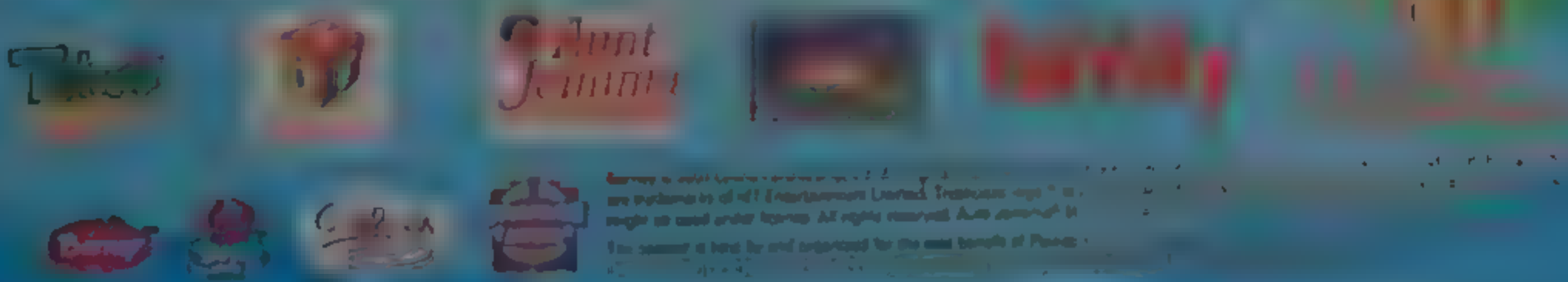
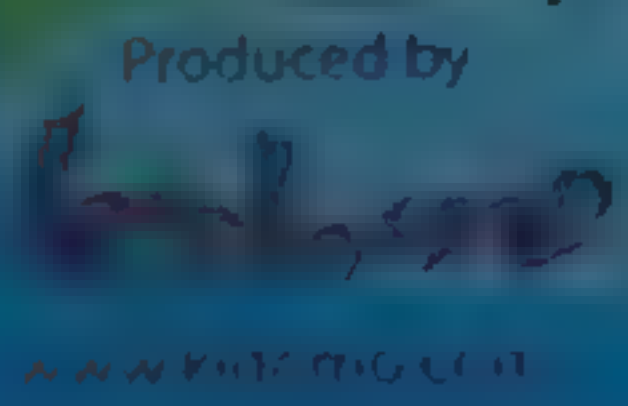
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order to produce 250 000 ounces of gold annually," according to the Medellín newspaper *El Colombiano*.

Such a large-scale mining operation is expected to provide several hundred jobs, but Marmateños see this as a limited opportunity. If exploitation is done through open-pit mining, it is expected to exploit in two decades what would take small mining 200 years. The environmental impacts of open-pit exploitation are another concern due to the use of cyanide in extraction and the giant holes left where mountains once stood.

THE SCALE of the operation would also require the relocation of the residents of Marmato, a process which is not without precedent in Colombia.

In his book *The Profits of Extermination*, Francisco Ramírez Cuellar argues that paramilitary violence, forced displacement, massacres and disappearances have been used to remove entire communities from resource-rich areas and to secure investments for multinational corporations.

In the countryside, huge swaths of land have been cleared of their inhabitants and are now home to sugar cane and African palm plantations, part of the burgeoning "biofuel" industry.

But Marmateños remain vehemently opposed to relocation, despite numerous strategies which have been used to compel people to leave.

When a landslide ripped through the centre of Marmato during the winter rains of 2006, leaving several buildings in ruins, the state geological agency Ingeominas recommended the removal of the town, despite noting that mitigation projects could avoid such disasters in the future. The government promptly declared Marmato a "high risk zone," making the unilateral decision to move the town for its own safety.

Colombian opposition Senator Jorge Robledo argues that while "millions of Colombians are living at risk"

of geological instability, the real motive behind the government-sponsored relocation of the town is Colombia Goldfields' mining project.

Despite the widespread opposition, there are already new buildings under construction in the neighbouring community of El Llano, where rivalries have a long and bitter history. Relocation to El Llano would also place the community within walking distance of an open-pit mine.

"We don't want what they are offering us," says one miner. "We don't want a nice big school or a new office for the mayor. We only want what we already have ... but here!"

The company has hired a sociologist and contracted an NGO to promote alternative economic activity for Marmateños who have lost their livelihoods as miners, such as agricultural production and tourism. But Marmateños are skeptical about how likely the community is to shift successfully to other economic activities.

"I have never seen an example of a community of miners transformed into farmers," argues Ruiz. "And what tourism will there be with an open-pit mine?"

But the rampant unemployment resulting from consolidation of property has been perhaps the most effective strategy in moving Marmato. According to Miguel Alberto Giraldo, the son of a famous Marmateño historian, Marmato had always known full employment, however humble it was, and the economic impacts of widespread unemployment have been catastrophic.

"Marmato doesn't exist for Marmateños anymore. They'll all have to go, but how, where and when?" he asks.

At a public forum in Marmato, a community elder asks the question on the minds of many in the community.

"Why are they so intent on kicking us out of our homes?"

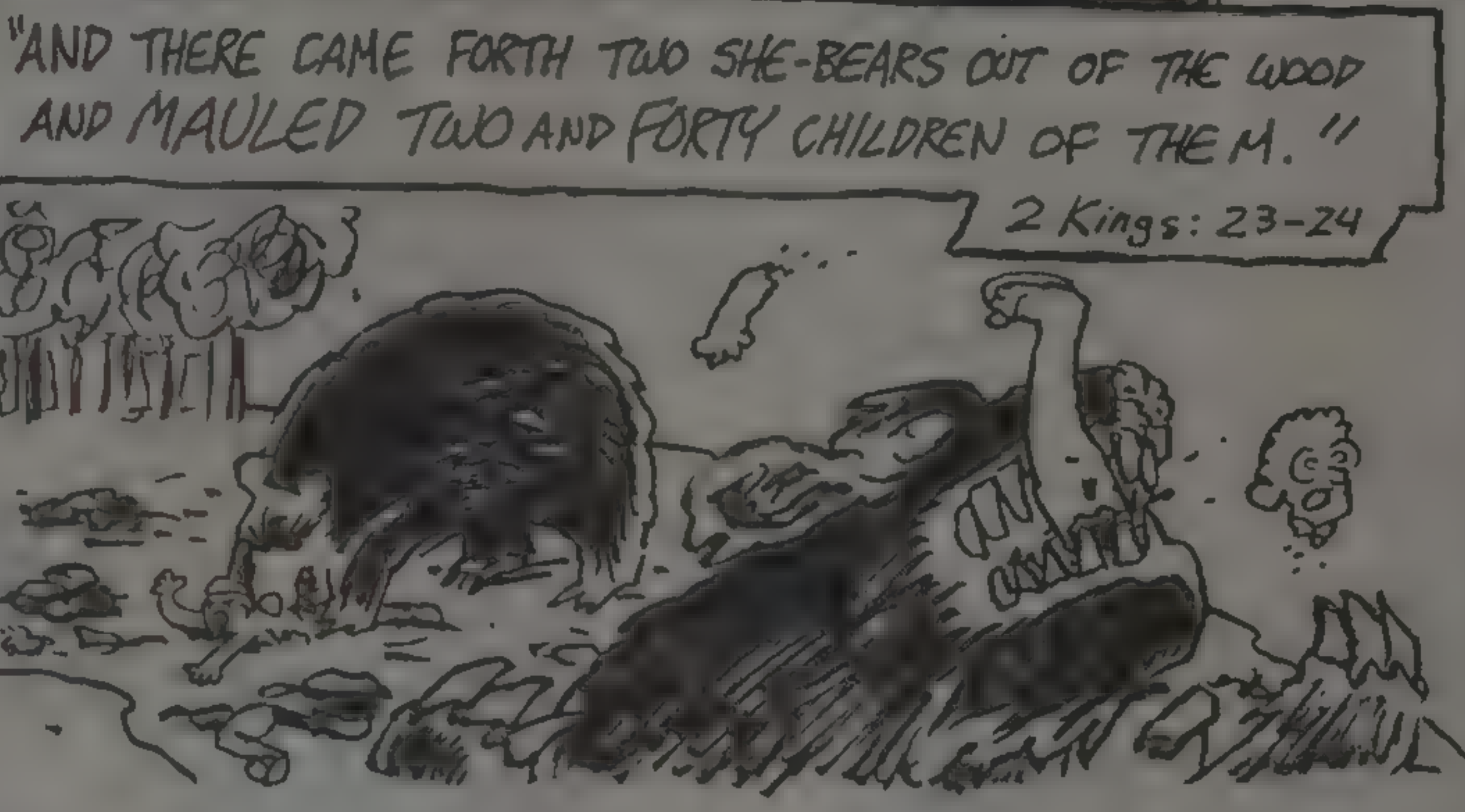
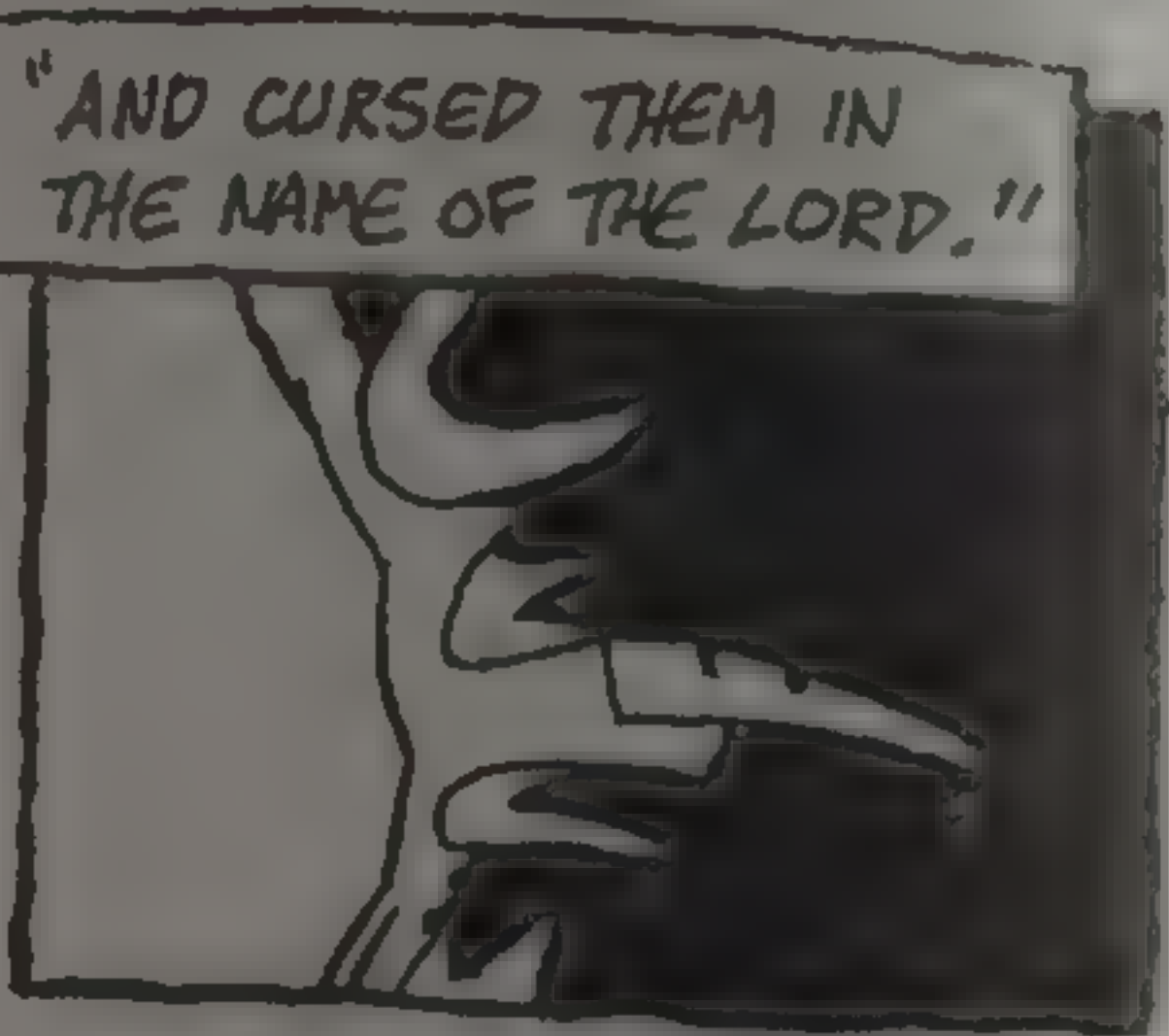
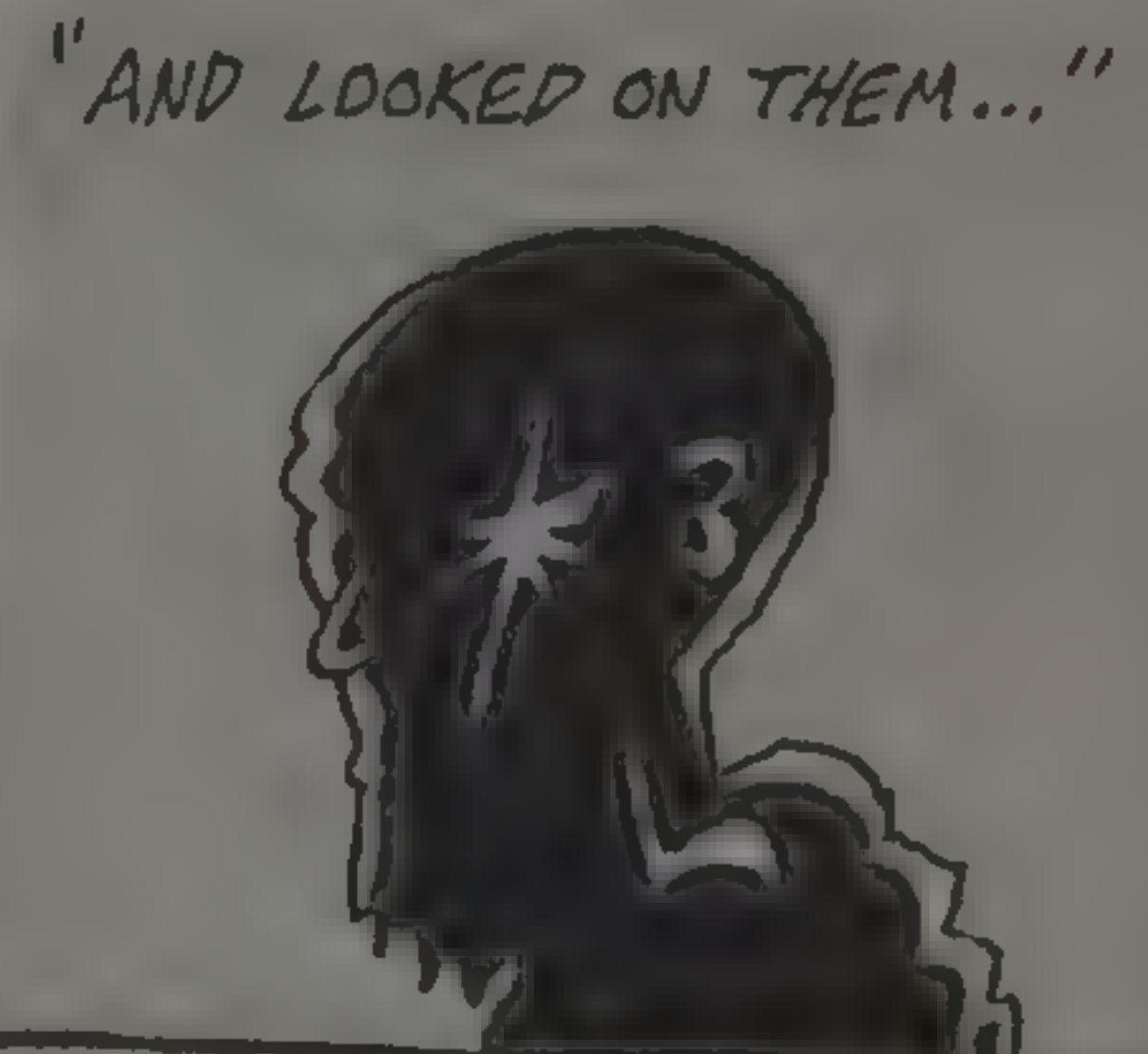
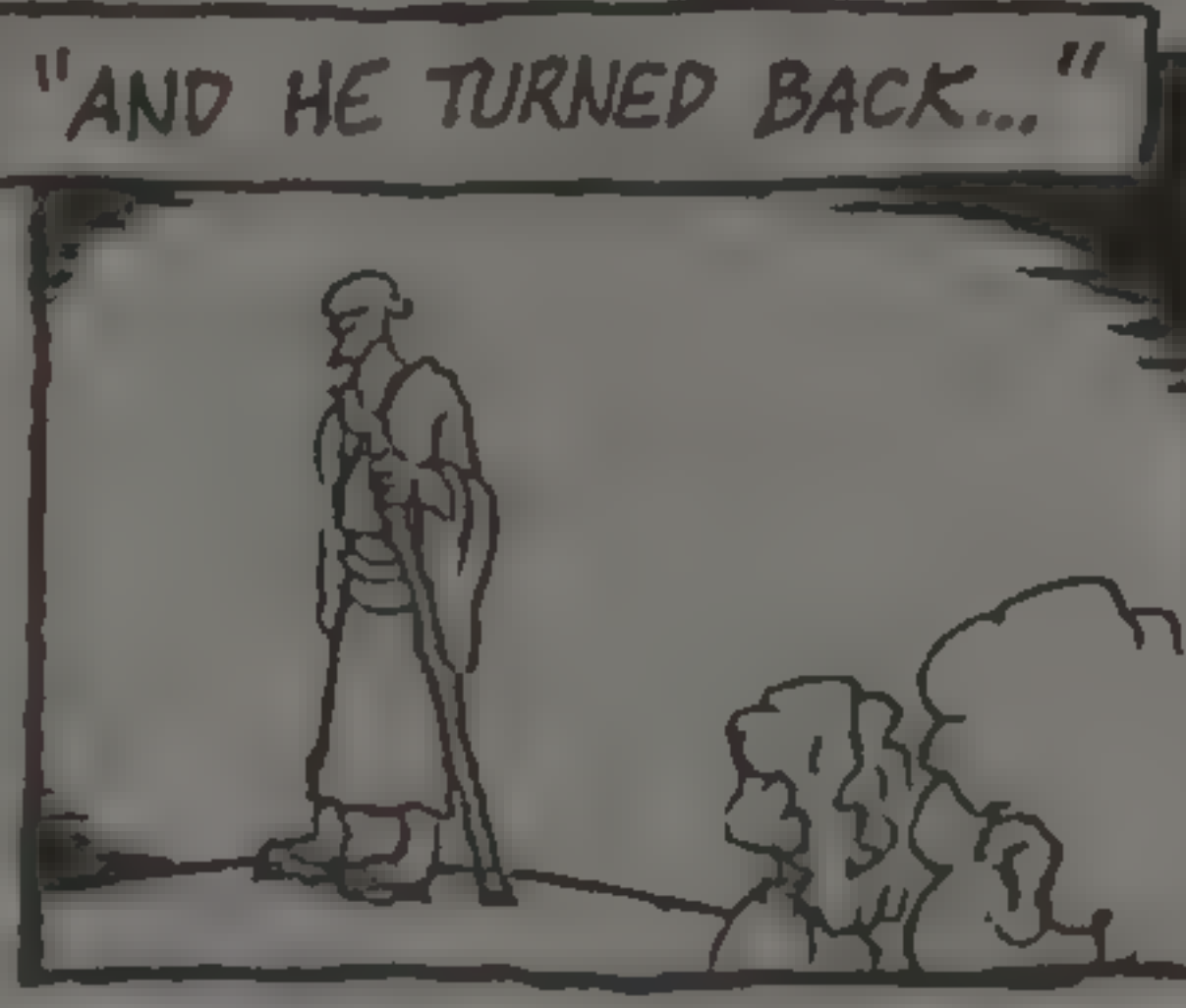
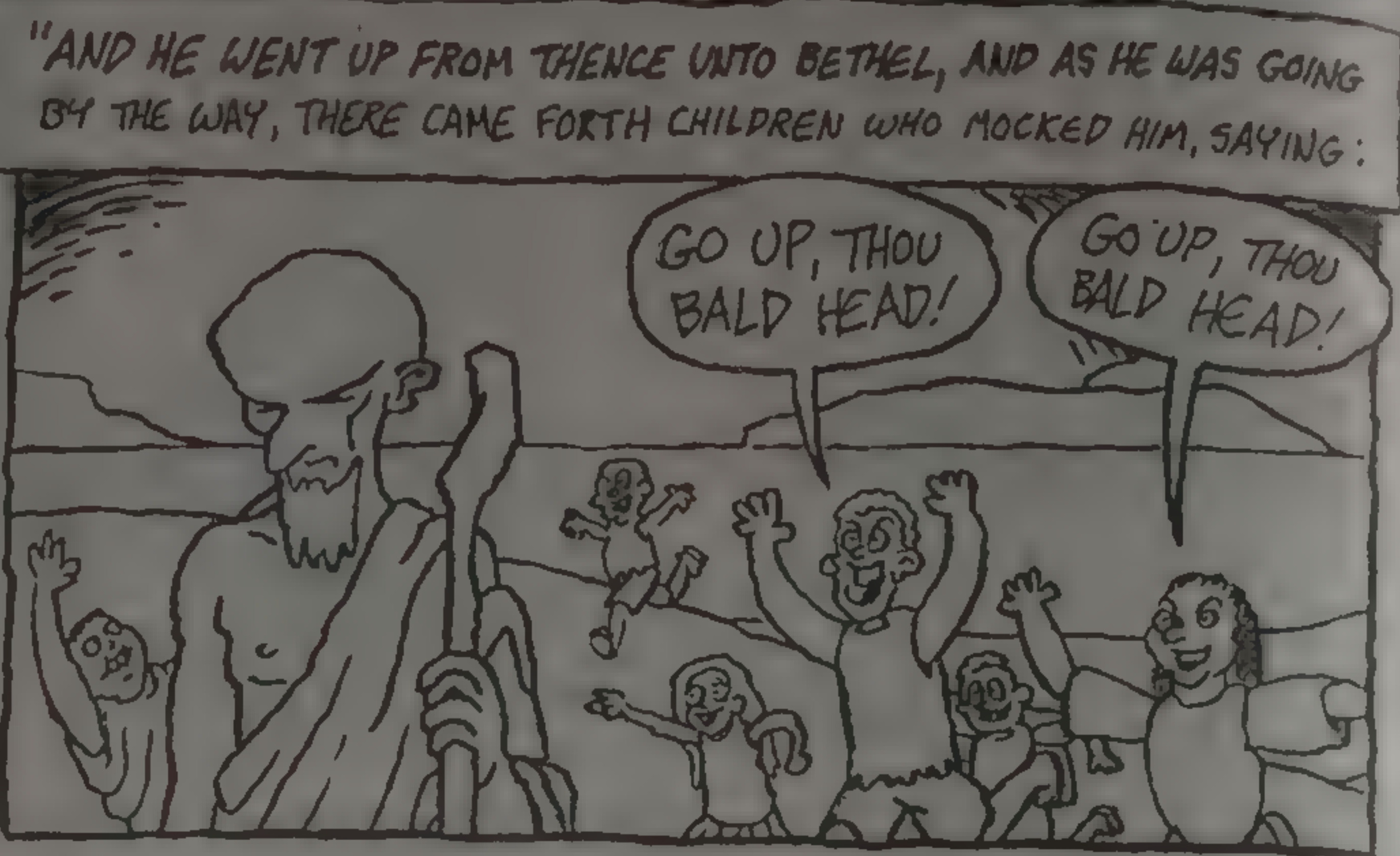
"What lies below this ground, leave it there ... it's for our grandchildren."

Michéal O Tuathail is a freelance journalist and a member of La Chiva, an Alberta-based group which works with communities in Colombia

BOB'S BIBLE TALES

AFFLICT YE NOT THE BALD

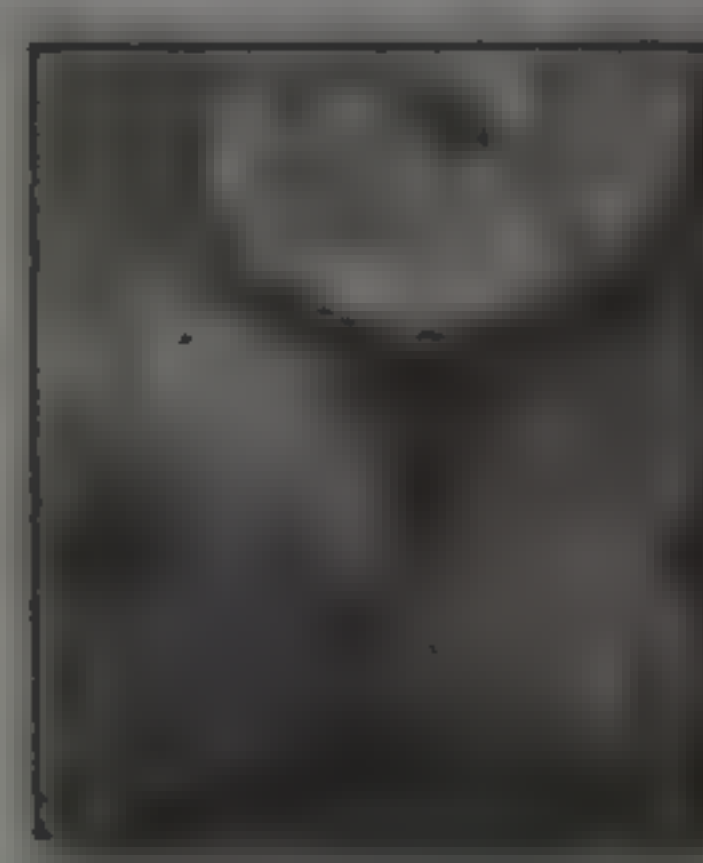
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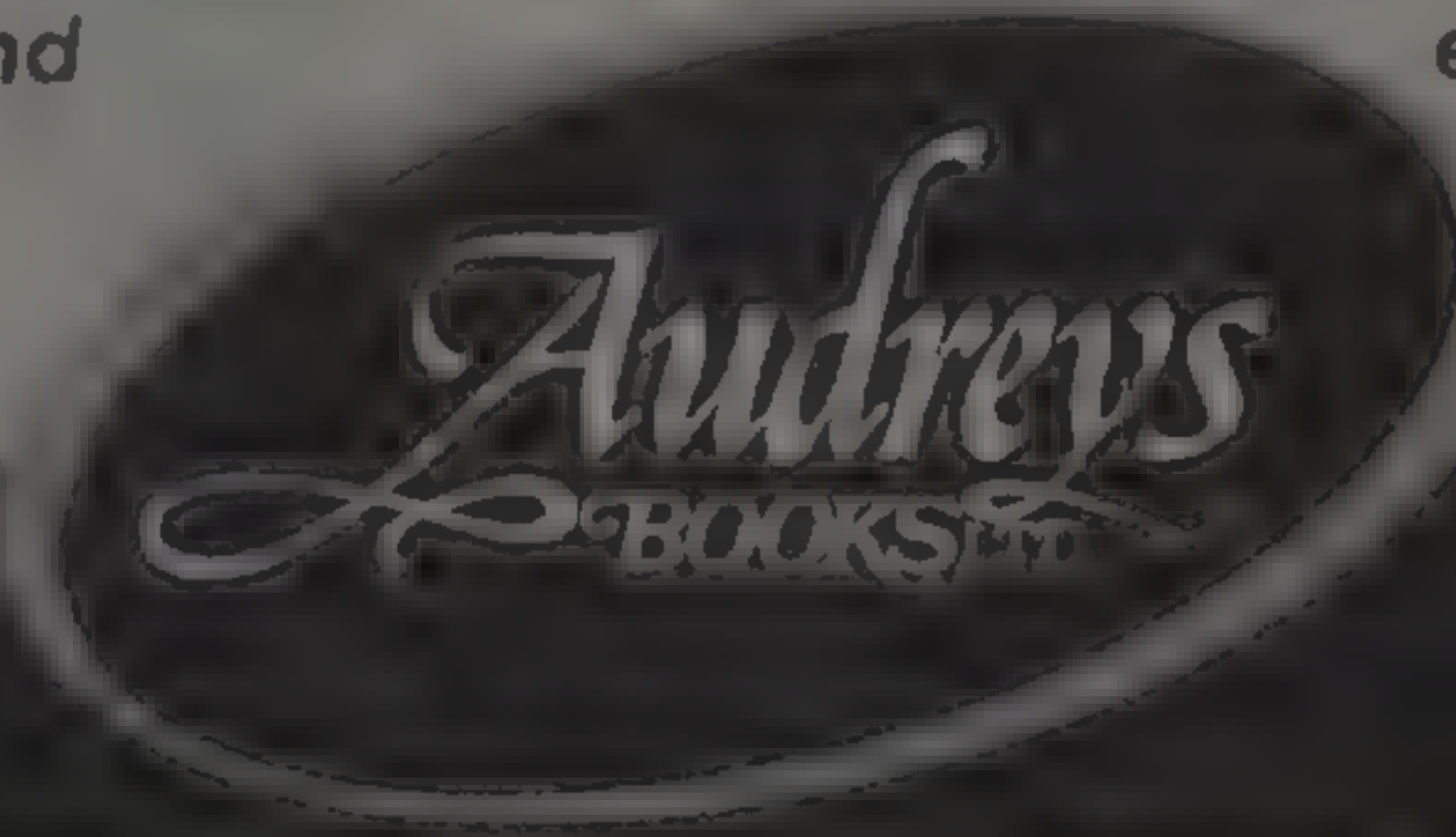
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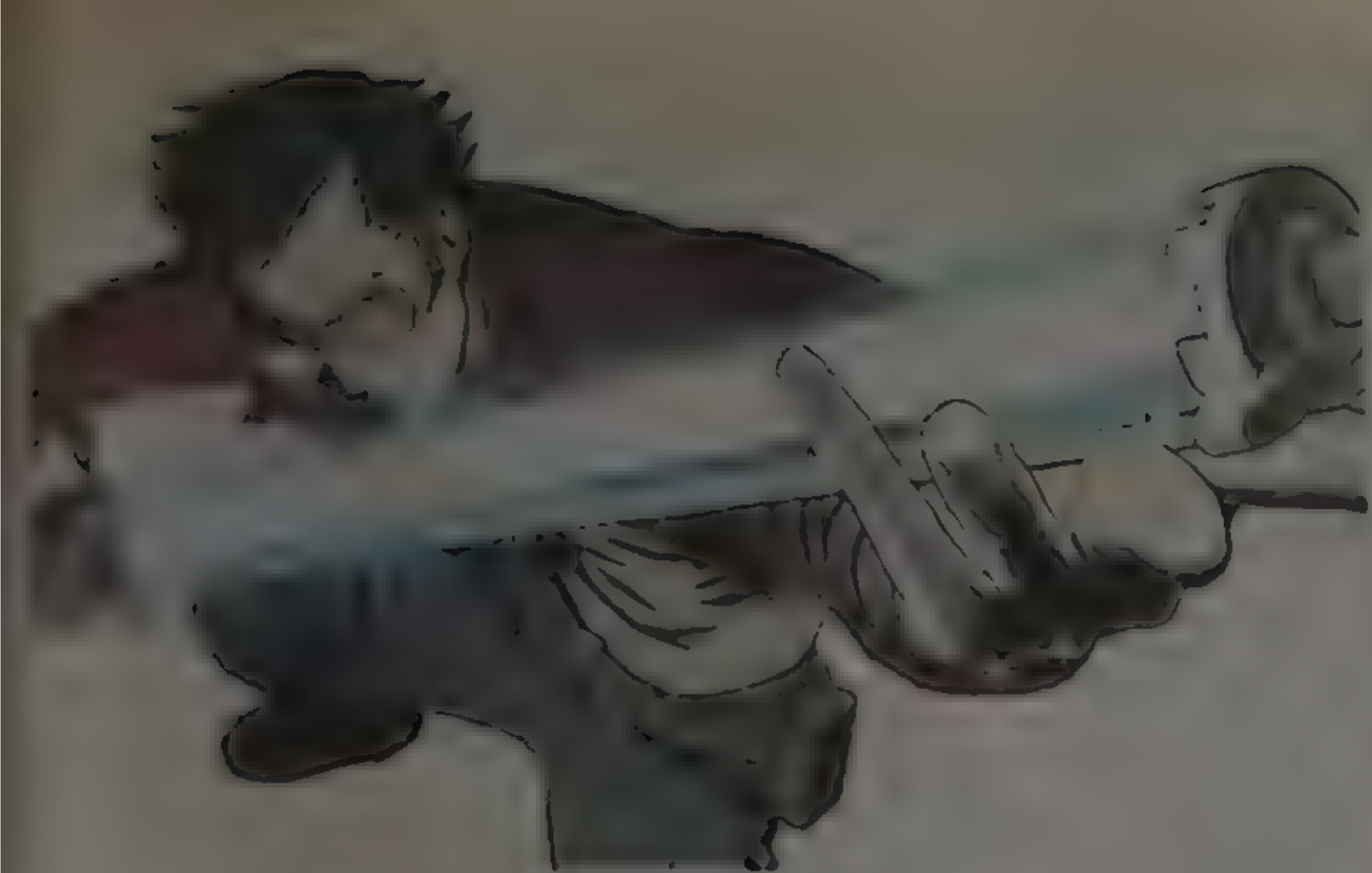
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May long weekend*

INFINITE LIVES

DAVIDSON, J. K. 1979. *Journal of the American Water Resources Association* 15:103-110.

landscape/agricultural moonlighting in the lawn-mowing and coconut-gathering trades. Mario gathered wild flowers and magic mushrooms, Link harvested organically grown bomb plants ...

A VERY Nintendo-centric list, reflecting the earthy preoccupations of maestro Shigeru Miyamoto. As the sun dapples my yard through the leafing-out elm, the local blue jay does his best rusty-gate impression and weird, unfamiliar bugs scurry around my firepit of scavenged cinderblocks, I feel where he's coming from. Wouldn't games be a lot more pleasant if magic seed-pods and rustic bushel-basket planters could bump first-aid kits and industrial crates downward in the hierarchy of onscreen idioms? If every megamacho Markus Fenix had to tend an orchard of Bullet Trees, home-brew their own steroids?

These are the kind of daydreams you have, pattering in your yard. Still, even with all this outdoorsiness, I couldn't stay away from videogames—they are everywhere, and can't resist them. I got a lot of time in with *My Life as a King*, the new downloadable WiiWare spinoff in the *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* universe, directing my happy little kingdom of adorable wizards and warriors until the sunshine glare off my TV screen reflected too much season-guilt into my eyes and I went back outside to mow. Friday night in Calgary, the old *Space Invaders* cabinet at Tubby Dog gave me a hard, embarrassing lesson on how far my old-school reflexes have degraded through years of being spoiled by today's babycakes difficulty levels; at Ikea the next day, shopping for patio accoutrements, it was all I could do to keep myself from the interactive virtual kitchen-creator kiosks

The spring/summer gamer guilt ... it burns those with certain social sensitivities. Every time we close a curtain to cut the glare or drape a shirt over our head and shoulders so we can see the screen(s) as we sit outside with our PSPs and DSEs, we get a pang—at those moments we're embodying every pasty-faced, basement-dwelling, exercise-shunning, troglodytic stereotype our tribe was ever hung with. But that doesn't stop us praying for a little bit of rain.

For the plants. Rain for the plants. A couple of cooler, overcast days, a little light drizzle ... they sure could use it. ♡

A gorgeous Victoria Day long weekend, clear and calm and well above 30 degrees in the foothills; the *Calgary Sun* takes pains to point out this is the first time in years "May Long" has been other than 72 hours of cold disappointment—testy rounds of *Monopoly* to an accompaniment of raindrops beating on RV fiberglass.

This weekend, though, my first summertime as a homeowner? Well! There's planting to be done and lawn to be mowed, weeds to be whacked. Many seasons' worth of debris to be disposed of, and a deck begging to be transformed from a manky, pressure-treated expanse of wood to a place where furniture and armchair guests' sodden DuMaurier butts into something that, if you squint just right, might appear roughly congruous to the "outdoor rooms" seen on magazine covers. All right!

But videogames ... they are the enemies of sun, plants and the outdoors, and deadlines don't relax just because it's *such a nice day*. I'm on the hook, and elsewhere, for game commentary. First impulse: go seasonal. Just as December/January can be faked through with Gift Guides and Year in Re/Preview pieces and September/October can support one or two looks into the madness of the Q4 releases, maybe May means I can bust out on ... gardening games?

farming-sim games, where you water plants over and over and over, raise a kid yourself a good farmwife; I got a pink-branded "cute" edition, now, for girl farmers ... I wonder what the eligible farm bachelors are like, there? How does sun-baked, dirt-caked, taciturn, debt-drowned and depressed translate into adorable Japanese cartoon style?

Um, *Animal Crossing*? Lots of weed-
ing and plucking to do there, when
you're not busy running embarrassing
errands for the laziest animals this side
of the tropics. "Laziest animal?" Koalas, I
guess. *Pikmin* is basically a gardening
game, too. More recently, *No More
Heroes* had ultrahomicidal lightsaber
bosses. *Team Tactics* had a team of

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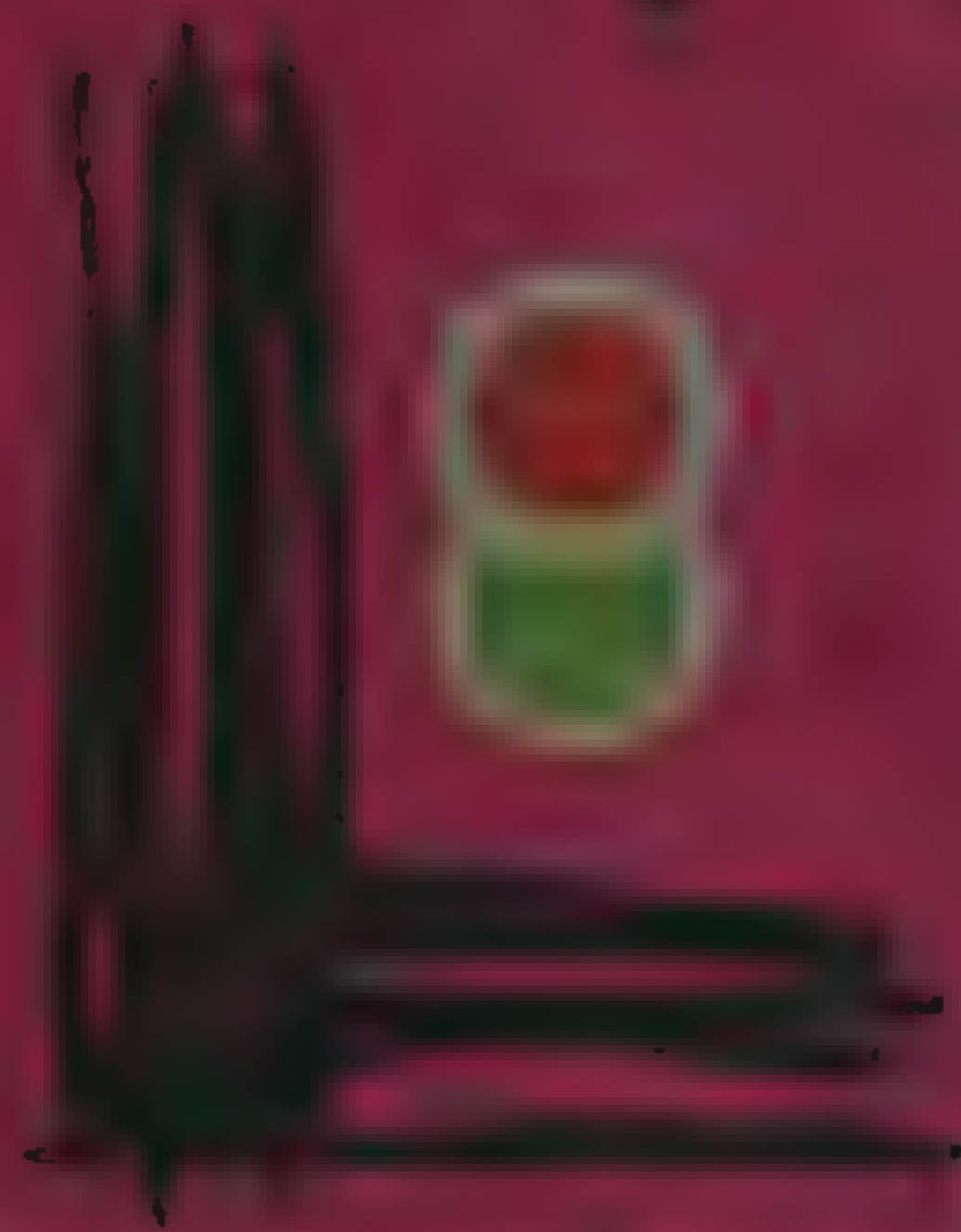


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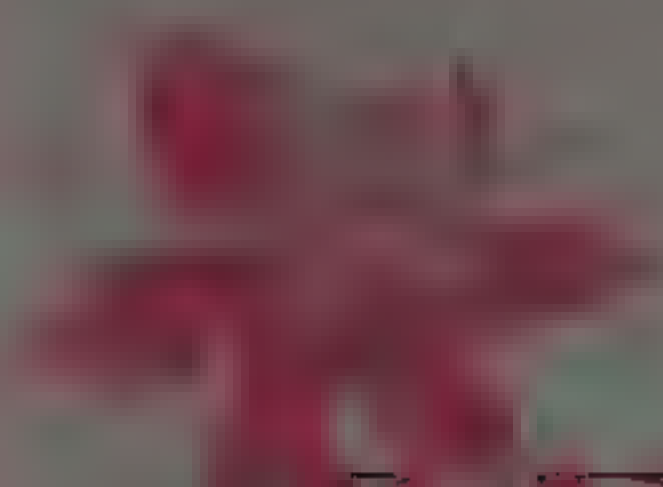
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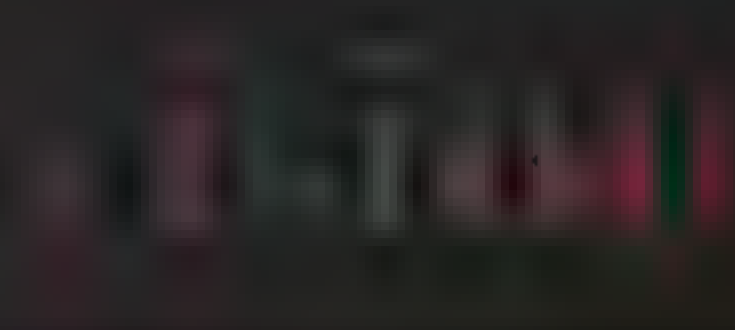
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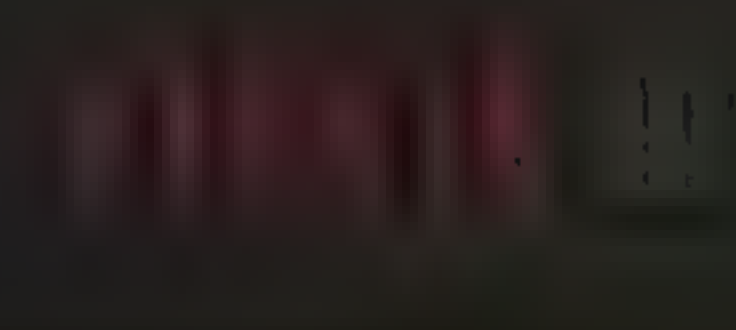
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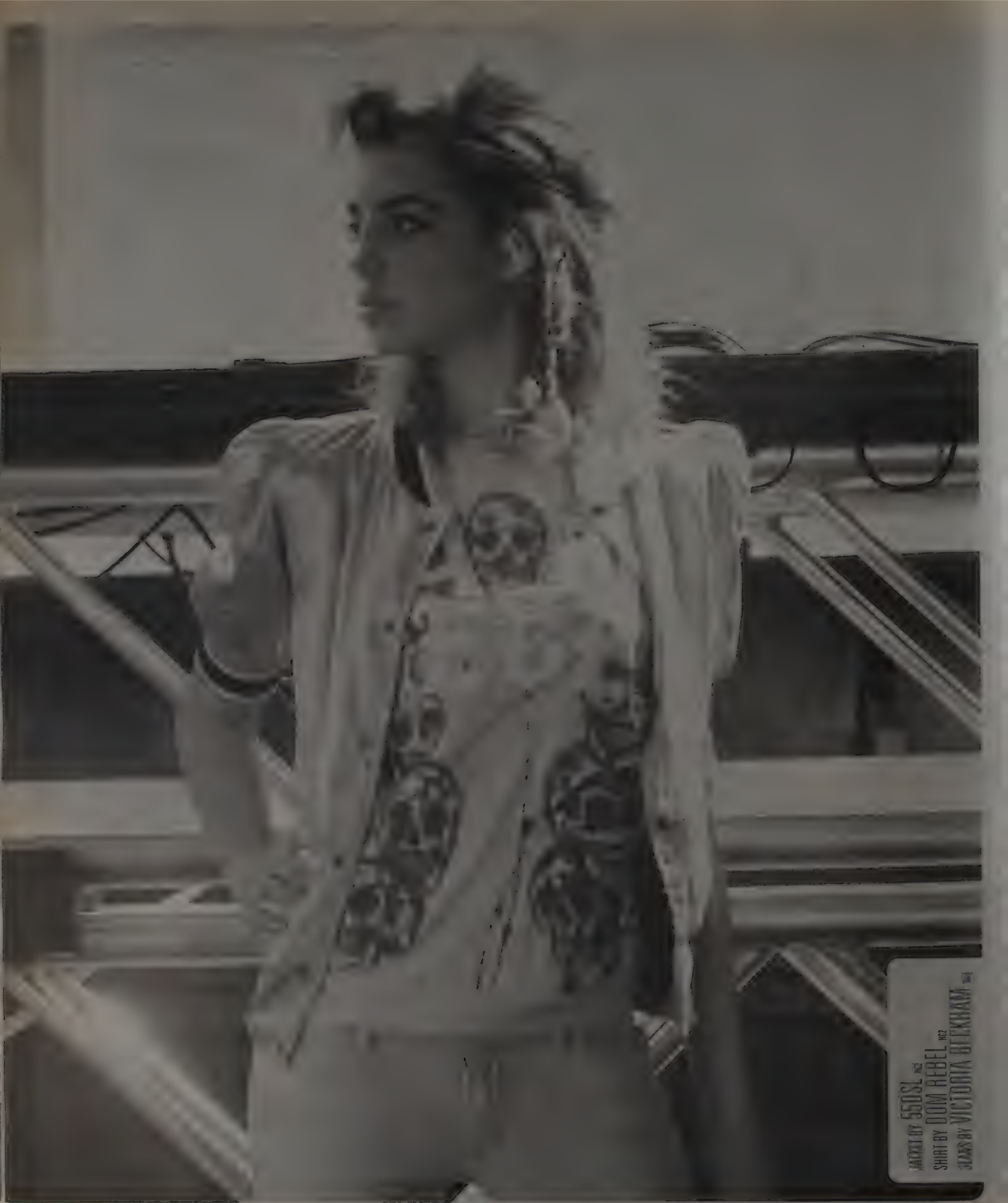
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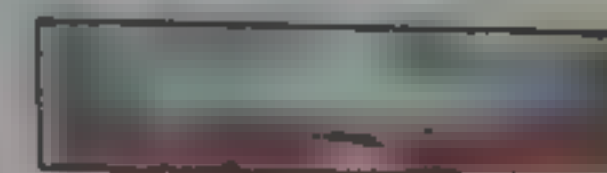
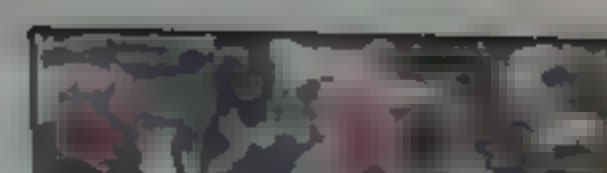
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Double your pleasure at the Two Rooms Café

Wander through my house on any given day right now and you'll see flimsy flip-flops carelessly kicked next to clunky winter boots, heavy winter coats sharing the hooks by the front door with light hoodies and carefree shorts piled up with sturdy jeans in my overflowing laundry basket. I'm not crazy (well, not really). It just means spring has arrived in Edmonton and it's time, once again, to resume my early morning Saturday jaunts to Old Strathcona and the farmers' market.

I pop in sporadically throughout the winter, but it's just not the same; it's the lure of all that deliciously fresh produce that begins to reemerge come April that consistently coaxes me out of bed earlier than my body deems appropriate. I needed sustenance before tackling the bustling crowds on this particular Saturday, so I decided to treat my daughter and myself to breakfast first.

It was the perfect morning to check out **Two Rooms Café**. I had never before ventured beyond the unassuming façade but, in my countless sojourns to Whyte Ave over the years, I was often intrigued by the quaint little patio perched out front and the tantalizing smells escaping from within. Parking was a non-issue at 8:30 in the morning so, in no time, we were climbing the wooden steps up to the entrance of the old Dominion Hotel Building. Access to the café is from inside this ancient building, which, oddly enough, smelled over-



BRUNCH

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whelmingly of fresh popcorn on this bright morning. I didn't think it was coming from the café, but if it was, it wouldn't be the first time I had indulged in popcorn for breakfast.

ONCE WE OPENED the door to the café, the movie theatre scent was replaced with the heavenly aroma of fresh baking; the heady mixture of sugar, cinnamon and buttery goodness swirled enticingly around us, leaving no doubt in my mind that this was going to be a very good morning. We had our pick of the seven tables and my daughter immediately deposited herself at a big square one next to the

huge window that overlooked Whyte Ave. I hastily dropped my stuff on the extra chair and made my way to the back of the café, lured by the amazing aroma and the sight of our waitress plucking enormous muffins from hot tins and carefully placing them into waiting wicker baskets.

The blueberry/bran and peach/apple muffins, all bursting with juicy chunks of fruit, had just come out of the oven

and, right beyond the counter in one of the two wall ovens, we could see the lemon/yogurt/berry ones rising before our eyes. After inspecting the muffins a bit closer, we ordered a skim milk latte (\$3) and a hot chocolate (\$3) and made our way back to our table.

My daughter described the café as "brown," but I would call it earthy and rustic. Brown was the dominant colour, though, and could be seen in multiple shades and textures throughout the café: the wooden tables and chairs, the brick walls, the painted pipes and the tile floor. Even the muted lighting seemed to have soft undertones of brown. The stark contrast of a simple, bright yellow or white flower on each table added a splash of colour and a homey touch.

The menu was a single page, with the breakfast offerings on one side and beverages on the other. Egg-y offerings dominate, but there's also granola, scrambled tofu, toast and, of course, those muffins, which were doing such a stellar job of tormenting me. As amazing as the muffins smelled, it seemed like an egg-y kind of day, and the vegetarian version of the breakfast burrito (\$11) sounded perfect. My daughter, wanting something sweet, was torn between having a lemon/yogurt/berry muffin (\$2.25) or the Cinnamon-kissed French Toast (\$11). The french toast won out, but only by a smidgen.

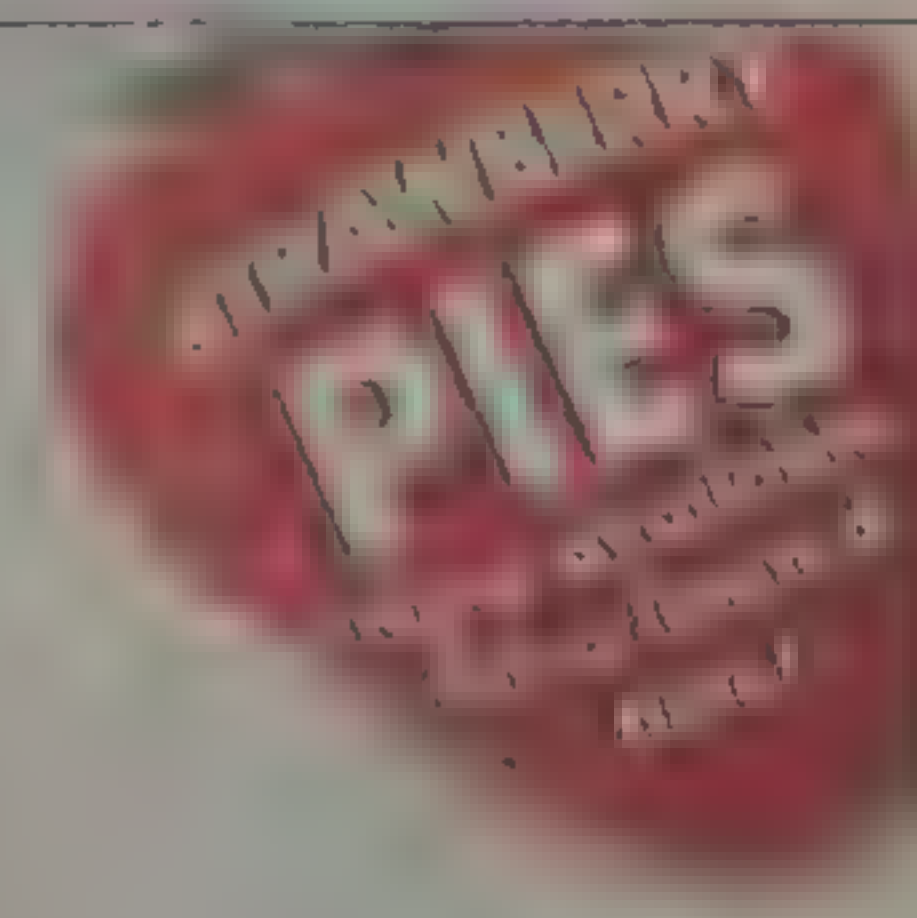
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BLENDING LOCAL AND EXOTIC, VANCOUVER'S FOOD SCENE SHINES

JEREMY DERKSEN / snowzone@vancouverweekly.com

The coast has a strong allure for many of us Edmontonians, landlocked as we are. In our small circle, we're one of several families who make regular pilgrimages to **Vancouver**. For me the primary reasons are the sea, the beaches, the mountains and my ex-pat Edmontonian friends who live there. But food always plays an important role, whether it's a reunion dinner among

TRAVEL VANCOUVER'S COASTAL CUISINES

friends or grabbing a bite on the way between various adventures. Having savoured the city's diverse offerings over several years, it's now one of the things I look forward to most.

Vancouver has become an interna-

tionally recognized culinary hotspot driven by the celebrity of "rock star" chefs like Rob Feenie. But with a scene as big as Vancouver's, there are so many famous, big name places—Lumière (where, until recently, Feenie was chef), Nu, West, Quattro, C. Cin—they can sometimes overshadow some of the other, lesser-known talents. But look beyond the brilliant glare of Michelin stars and you'll find a diverse palette worth sampling: the

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Tapas joints, the spices of the Mediterranean, the noodle-houses of East Asia, miniature Buddhas, fish and chips, and of course, that ubiquitous sushi counter. In the entrance, a sign reads "Welcome to the most creative restaurant in Canada, drawing on the best of fruit, vegetables and local Okanagan wines and produce to further inspire local chefs." The city's up and coming food scene is mentored with or taken from those aforementioned "staples." And they're part of a scene that is so competitive that diversity and creativity are essentials, says Jordan Stewart, which breeds, "a contagious enthusiasm about experimentation. And frankly there isn't a better place for it. You've got such a mix of cultures and an abundance of fresh food."

Stewart—a former Edmonton service industry veteran—is a founding partner in Chill Winston, a successful tapas lounge in Gastown. Since opening two years ago, it has garnered rave reviews and earned mention as one of the top five patios in the city. Set in a red-brick heritage building on Alexander Street, Chill Winston presents innovative twists on classic dishes such as its "Big Ribs," braised with red wine and molasses, or tuna tartar (Ahi tuna marinated in sweet soy and sesame, served with a dungeness crab and avocado spread and miso vinaigrette). Despite being a larger restaurant, they also produce everything in-house (no prepackaged foods) and source primarily local, organic ingredients.

In fact, local and organic have a long history in Vancouver dating back to 1986, when local restaurateur John Bishop opened his namesake restaurant, Bishop's, and became one of the originators of the movement.

MARK MCEWAN, executive chef at Sanafir, also emphasizes the fresh, local and creative aspects of Vancouver cuisine. "Being a port of call, there's such a rich diversity of people. That transfers into the cuisine. And

you've got so much to pull from—fresh produce and wine from the Okanagan, and the ocean is right there." McEwan has been at Sanafir for nearly two years, but prior to that, he did a tour of duty in several of Vancouver's more well-known establishments, including the Sequoia Grill (formerly the Teahouse), Seasons in the Park, the Sandbar and Cardero.

Sanafir takes its theme from the Silk Route, and McEwan thrives on experimenting with flavours from India, Asia and the Mediterranean. Everything comes in trios, with a sample from each of the flavours of the different countries. McEwan explains that he finds as much inspiration in exotic spices such as urfa or ras au haout as the fresh ingredients on hand locally.

While the spices of the Silk Route are one way to enhance the dining experience, some local establishments use different approaches to add flair. Maxine's Hideaway, a popular hangout off of Davie Street, plays up the infamy of the building it inhabits—a former bordello—by offering up cabaret nights. The Reef, a Caribbean jerk and curry joint on Main Street, lures customers and saps their will to leave with a laidback island reggae vibe. And then there's Samba, where waiters carry meat on swords, proffering it to customers.

With all the lush parks and beaches, perhaps it's only natural that even the street vendors are upping the ante. For the streetside connoisseur, one of the most interesting examples of fast-food "fusion" is a Japanese twist on the classic North American hot dog. Japa Dog, which has been featured in *Maclean's*, serves hot dogs with toppings like miso, teriyaki, nori and daikon. Even fish and chips can be an adventure. Go Fish, right on the wharf at False Creek, serves fresh (daily), locally caught salmon, cod, halibut and shellfish battered with beer from the nearby Granville Island brewery.

For Vancouverites, getting street-side takeout and picking your own view may be one of the city's most empowering activities. Prime ocean

views don't come cheap in a city where real estate prices are through the roof. But if you want to rent a view, the Sequoia Grill on Ferguson's Point in Stanley Park is an excellent vantage point offering a white-linen table service and excellent plates. For higher ground, both Altitudes Bistro and the Observatory Restaurant up at the top of Grouse Mountain look out over the entire city and the ocean.

WITH VANCOUVER ABOUT to host the Olympics in 2010, it seems things are heating up in the industry. Though hesitant to attribute the current activity to the Olympics, Stewart did acknowledge it's getting more competitive.

"In some cases, chefs are being traded like hockey players, and it's front page news when they leave to open their own places. I don't know all the details, but I think it signalled a real change in the scene when Rob Feenie and Lumière parted ways," Stewart confides. "And there are rumours that New York chefs are looking at Vancouver as fertile ground."

(One, acclaimed New York chef Daniel Boulud, is already on his way. He plans to open a Vancouver version of his successful NY resto, DB Bistro Moderne, in partnership with Lumière.)

Rumours aren't uncommon in an industry that Stewart says is actually quite small. "It's a little bit incestuous—everybody knows everybody. You end up with a really deep back-room culture." Critics and industry veterans circulate on review blogs like Urban Diner. But while the current wave of restaurant openings may be crowding the backrooms, McEwan takes it in stride.

"Any time there's a major world-wide event, everyone wants to get in and make some cash. But when the dust settles after the Olympics, we'll see who survives."

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SHARMAN HNATIUK / sherman@vancouverweekly.com

Shhhh ... I want to tell you about my favourite lunchtime bargain. One day I joined a group of guys I work with for lunch. I jumped in the car not knowing where I was going; I was surprised when we arrived at the **Italian Bakery** on 97th street. I'm sure that like me you've driven by the totally random Italian bakery in the middle of Chinatown a million times. What was funny was that even though I am a sucker for bakeries and I frequent a number of Asian restaurants in the area, I had never been to this Italian bakery.

I quickly asked what we were going to have here, and the response was sandwiches. To be honest, I am not a huge sandwich fan. Sure I enjoy a BLT, but only if you lose the lettuce, and double the cheese and bacon. I'm not a huge fan of raw vegetables and I absolutely hate when sandwiches, wraps and submarines are packed with filler ingredients like lettuce. I find they take away from what I like, which is basically meat and cheese. Don't judge me, I know I am a headed down the road to scurvy, I just don't care.

I pouted my way into the back of the bakery and was shocked to find the small area in front of the deli counter packed with all sorts of people. I pulled a number from the red dispenser and poked around until they called me up. I was slightly confused by the 8 x 11 sign with three sandwich options:

Small \$2.50 including GST—one meat, one cheese

Medium \$3 including GST—two meat, one cheese

Large \$5 including GST—two meat, one cheese

I mentioned that it was my first time here and asked what the deal was. My chosen sandwich artist showed me the three sizes of bread options, and told me that I could have any meat or cheese I wanted. I decided

ITALIAN BAKERY
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ed that \$2.50 was too cheap to be a good sandwich, so I decided on the medium. I dismissed the mustard, mayo and banana peppers and asked her to go heavy on the vegetable spread. I took a quick peek at the 50 or so meat options and decided on the proscutto. In an effort to try something new, I looked past some of my true loves for the cheese selection—havarti, gouda, asiago—and decided on the German Butter.

I JOINED MY male co-workers at one of the three café style tables by the window and bit in. Seriously, this is how all sandwiches should be made. There had to be a centimetre of meat packed in with the delicious cheese and roasted red pepper tasting veggie spread. I sat there, fresh crusty bun crumbs all over my clothes, completely in my happy place. I couldn't finish the medium, but I couldn't pass by some of the delicious pastries I saw—this is a bakery, after all—so I left off the sandwich and tried a cream horn (\$2). Again, I sat there with powdered sugar all over my face and clothes, completely in my happy place.

The Italian Bakery has become my new favourite lunch place. I'm a sucker for a good-tasting bargain, and the exponential number of meat and cheese combinations has kept me happy at least once a week for the last two months. I've also learned that a small sandwich is more than enough for me, but also leaves room for one of the many cream-filled pastries that call to me through the glass. On my most recent trip I learnt that you don't have to buy the whole tiramisu for \$25, you can have a slice for \$2.50. I prefer a light tasting tiramisu that

doesn't have a strong coffee taste. I can tell you that after my first bite my first response was "Oh my blam this is good tiramisu." My friend and I were there laughing as I continued to inhale the fluffy dessert.

IF YOU'RE A FAN of sandwiches, you don't care about vegetables and love meat, you will most certainly love the bargain-priced sandwiches at the Italian bakery. The \$5 sandwich is the size of my face, and physically heavy, but somehow the guys I work with can pack them back. Boys are gross though, and they don't seem to care about keeping room for dessert the way I do.

I've since shared the secret with a number of my girlfriends who are open to a sandwich and fresh cream-filled canoli. It's great for a quick take-away, but pulling up a chair by the window is also fabulous for people watching. While there are many sandwich lovers who pull a ticket from the number dispenser, there are also many regulars who come in to buy bread and fresh pastries. Right in the middle of Chinatown, the Italian Bakery has managed to satisfy customers since 1960.

Every visit I learn there is something else to intrigue me. Coffee and hot chocolate are a dollar each, cappuccino or a café latté a whopping \$2. You can have a small sandwich, San Pellegrino Limonata, and your choice of biscotti for the bargain-basement price of \$5.

It is the simplicity and quality of their ingredients that keep me coming back for more. I also appreciate their patience with me as I attempt to try different combinations. A favourite employee is always eager to help me discover a new cheese to please my palate. (I thought such novelties like great customer service for a \$2.50 sandwich were a thing of the past.)

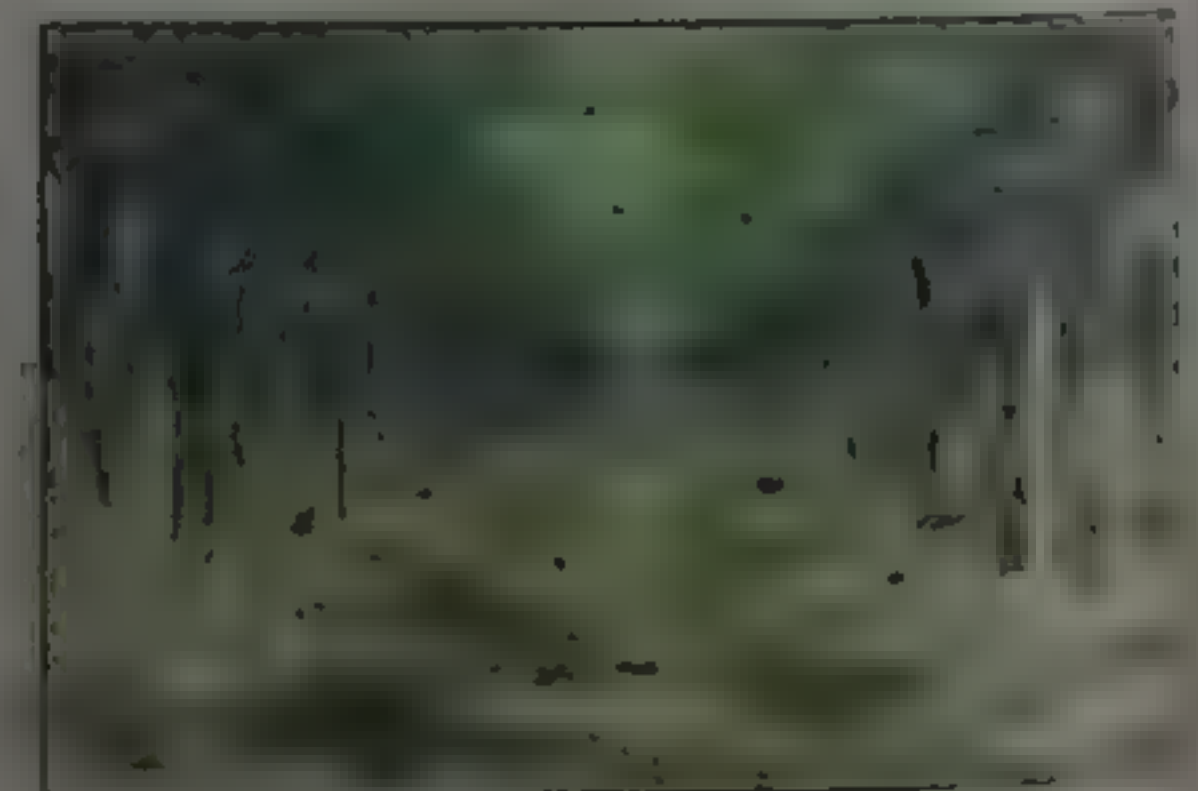
You won't be disappointed, but please, try to keep it down. ▽

FOOD NEWS!

DISH WEEKLY

WINE, WINE, EVERYWHERE SOME WINE

Edmontonians will have a chance to sample wines from two of Canada's most unique and intriguing wineries this week. First up, on Fri, May 23 at 3 pm, the Sutton Place Hotel continues its Capitals Wine Club events later this week with a tasting put on by NK'Mip Cellars, the first Aboriginal-owned/operated winery in North America. Winemaker Randy Picton will be on hand to provide samplings of three different brands from NK'Mip winery, as well as answer any questions you may have.



Then, next Wed, May 28 at 4 pm, deVine Wines will host a free tasting with winemaker Grant Stanley from Quail's Gate, one of the Okanagan's finest wineries. The tasting coincides with Mr Stanley's participation in the Celebrity Tennis Match for the fight with Cancer society, so there's even a moral reason to drop by and try some fine wine.

Dish Weekly spills the beans on many events in Edmonton. Have something Edmonton's gourmands should know about? Send all your event details to dish@vancouverweekly.com

Memories of a Prague Spring beer

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I have fond, although somewhat fuzzy, memories of Prague. I spent a week or so in that historic and beer-loving city one spring about 15 years ago, drinking beer and soaking up its gorgeous architecture and street culture. I remember, among others, a particular beer that tingled my tastebuds and wowed my thirsty throat.

It was so delicious, I found a way to return home with a mug from that brewery. (I will remain mute on how exactly I procured the glass.) It still sits on my shelf, frequently pulled out for light lagers, pilsners and other sparkling gold beers. Its ridged sides and royal-esque logo take me back, ever so briefly, to those spring days sipping in Prague beer halls.

That beer is Krusovice, and until recently it was not available in our fair city. But then one day, while perusing the aisles in my favourite beer store, its gold and red label jumped out at me. I simply must try it again, I pledged. And so I took some home with me.

The Královský Pivovar Krusovice (the Royal Brewery of Krusovice) is one of the oldest breweries in the Czech Republic, established in 1517 by royal



decree. It survived the years of Communist rule (by being state-run), and remains the fifth largest brewer in the Czech Republic. Today, it's owned by Heineken, part of the cadre of huge multi-national beer corporations.

The Imperial Lager is their version of a bohemian pilsener, a hoppy, pale golden lager originating in the region.

I OPENED THE BOTTLE with some anticipation, my Krusovice mug in hand. It poured a bright medium gold with a lively white head. It had a sparkling clarity and showed off a bubbly effervescence. The aroma was as I remembered it—soft malt and pleasant floral hop aroma.

The taste began as grainy malt sweet-

ness with soft edges. It's a more complex malt flavour than North American lagers (reflecting the Czech's unique "decoction" mash method). The hop bitterness is rounded and earthy, but lacking the robustness I both recollect and anticipate. Some hoppiness lingers after the swallow, but it is a bit sharper than the upfront hop.

Krusovice is clean and well-made, but not the earth-shaker I remember. It isn't as distinctive and complete as its neighbours, Pilsner-Urquell and Budvar. It's a fine beer, but, quite frankly, it's missing that extra satisfaction I remember from years ago. It could be the consequences of corporate buy-outs, or it might be some memory-fantasizing on my part. Or maybe a bit of both. ▼

TWO ROOMS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 79

OUR DRINKS CAME in large mugs, the kind that is perfect for wrapping cold hands around. My latté was wonderful; the right size, the right temperature, the right creaminess, the right everything. I would go back simply for one of those. My daughter's hot chocolate looked sufficiently decadent, complete with billowy whipped cream and a dark chocolate drizzle. She detected a slightly unusually flavour (maple?) but was quite content.

As we sipped our drinks and watched Whyte Ave come to life, the café started to fill up. Early morning regulars, coming in for their weekly fix of a coffee and one of those muffins, were filtering in. Pretty soon everyone was munching away except us, the hazard of not ordering something that was already sitting there, begging to be eaten. Between sneaking jealous glances at the other diners and watching with interest as an industrious gentleman tried, in vain, to hose the senseless graffiti off the big yellow building across the street, the time passed quickly.

Just as I was debating the merits of absconding with someone else's muffin, two square plates finally filled the empty space on our table. My burrito was a divine mixture of scrambled eggs, roasted red peppers, jalapenos, black beans and salsa, all jumbled together and wrapped up in a sun-dried tomato tortilla. My daughter, unaware that my scrumptious-looking grilled burrito

contained the much dreaded (if her) salsa and jalapenos, begged for a bite. Half a burrito later, I declared it off-limits and quickly devoured the other half before she had a chance to complain. The crisp tortilla gave way to the pillow-y softness of the eggs, revealing a mellow, comforting interior that had bursts of intense flavour and hints of spice.

It's supposed to come with hot potatoes but I ordered it without. I'm just not a home potatoes type person. I'm sure they're perfect respectable potatoes, but I was much happier with the leafy greens, topped with ripe strawberries and nectarine slices, which replaced them.

Because I was forced to share my burrito, I had unrestricted access to the french toast. Three big fat cinnamon-y slices topped with a tan strawberry/blueberry sauce, a little pot of pure maple syrup and a couple mounds of velvety whipped cream proved to be a challenge even for the two of us. They were rich, moist, custard-y and sweet, and the cinnamon in them almost made me feel like I was eating an ultra-gooey cinnamon bun. Some did get left on the plate, but only because there was simply nowhere to put it.

By the time we had finished stuffing ourselves, there was a line of hungry people waiting to be fed, so we quickly grabbed a muffin to go (we could resist) and paid our bill. Besides the farmers' market, what got me up the first place, was waiting. But with the discovery of Two Rooms Café, my life may get even easier to haul myself out of bed on Saturday mornings. ▼

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Willkommen in Spreepark's 'spectacle with substance'

EDMONTON'S ART COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO CREATE A PLAY IN AN ABANDONED AMUSEMENT PARK

BY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vancouverweekly.com

If I had to articulate what I'm reaching for, in terms of any directing philosophy, it'd be 'spectacle with substance,'" muses Michelle Kennedy. "That's what I've been trying to do in my own work." Kennedy's an emerging director, a few years out of theatre school but kipped for a bright career, not simply in terms of technical training, but also with the sharp cultural acumen that can keep a traditional art form moving forward. "The theatre/music thing doesn't come together all that often in a real, collaborative way. It does in a campy sense, but not 'serious' theatre with the music that's current," Kennedy plains. "A lot of people are into spectacle-for-spectacle's-sake, and I love Cirque de Soleil, that sort of great big thing. But the ideas don't translate to the audience, or stay with them. I'd also like that connection to something more." On the other hand, Kennedy's also happy to see bands turning again towards theatricality after a long period where feigned artlessness was seemingly the pinnacle of expression. "How can I care about work if the people who made it don't care? Or are they trying to look like they don't care?" she shrugs. "For a while, 'indie' meant less reduced, minimalist, rely-on-technology thing. And that can be good. The way I've learned to direct is indie, all about the alternative venue, accessible, affordable, DIY all the time. But now, I want to go bigger." Her longing for more magnificent theatrical vistas dovetailed with the minor movement that is *Willkommen in Spreepark*, which—unless everything goes to *scheiße*—promises to fulfill a vision of spectacle with substance. "This project speaks more to the idea of culture in the world today," she muses. "Visual arts, theatre, music—40 people from these communities are involved in the show, and enough word of mouth alone we can reach an audience of people we know. I hope it's broader though, and these communities come together and bring in a wider audience." Kennedy lapses into reflection. "I know it sounds goofy and arty," she admits, "but culture and art are as important now as they've ever been. We're so alienated from our community. We can access all this other stuff so easily, from all over the world, Broadway or Berlin, and know what's going on. We can hop on YouTube and see a bit of a big famous show. Well, we want to tell our communities, ah, it's easy to access this YouTube



COVER

THU, MAY 22 - SAT, MAY 24 (7:30 PM)
WILLKOMMEN IN SPREEPARK
DIRECTED BY MICHELLE KENNEDY
WRITTEN BY MARSHALL WATSON
STARRING NICK GREEN, MATHEW HULSHOF, MARY HULSHOF
MUSIC BY BELGIUM, MICHAEL RAULT & THE MIXED SIGNALS, BLIND TIGER, TIGER, ILLEFIT OUTFIT, FIELD & STREAM, BAYONETS!!!
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video of *Wicked*, and it's super-cool, but why not go watch people you know—people who live and work here?" The more global we become, the more local we have to support. Theatre falls into that, too." **NOT THAT SPREEPARK** is theatre, exactly. There's a large theatrical component, but the project's more sprawling and integrative than that. Oddly, the roots of *Spreepark* couldn't be more haphazard. Local musi-

cian/writer/hand-in-everything-er Marshall Watson (of My Robot Unicorn, a band as whimsical as its name implies) was introduced to Calgarian counterpart Mark Hamilton (whose band Woodpigeon is as fey as its name implies), and they bonded over their shared love of dudes and glockenspiels and the astounding coincidence both had separately broken into Spreepark, an abandoned East Berlin amusement park with a colourful past. The only fitting way to celebrate their budding friendship was to start a band all about those commonalities, and shout it to the rooftops—with handclaps. Spreepark the band was born. Their first album—modestly titled *We're Reinventing Music*—was made in a feverish weekend of collaborative writing and recording, aided by Woodpigeon bandmate Annalea Sordi and Champion City Records labelhead Eric Cheng. The results and process were satisfying, and they quickly recorded a follow-up, *The Gaysian Invasion*.

Right away, Spreepark (the band) had roller-coaster-like momentum of its own. By the time they played their first release show last summer—the double-album set was a free download; their only merchandise was a gorgeous CD case that came with twin labeled blank discs—they'd accumulated musical guests drawn from several Alberta bands, plus their own dancer. "But how could we tour?" Cheng laments. "We're all in other bands or have so much else on the go." Spreepark was intended as a side affair to reinvigorate creative types by letting them goof around musically with no expectations, but reviews were good, and people liked the loopy confections that enveloped the idea of fun dance music with loosey-goosey pop and over-the-top baroque noodlings. The songs were, by Watson's assessment, "too good to waste". "Mark was talking about how Daft Punk may or may not exist, how no one knew who was playing," Cheng recalls. "We joked about having indie

bands from different cities play our music instead of touring. Like a franchise." A narrative buried in the music was also worth rescuing: two gay boys, an abandoned amusement park, a musical adventure. **THE CATALYST** In bridging these ideas together was the infusion of money and attention Cultural Capital status brought to the local scene. "The Edmonton Explorations grant was supposed to connect disciplines," Cheng reasons. "To connect different communities. We started to think about how Spreepark could do that." Watson and Cheng proposed extending Spreepark across as many disciplines as they could: a play riffing on Hamilton and Watson's Berlin junkets, up-and-coming bands reinterpreting original Spreepark songs and releasing a soundtrack, an army of visual artists and graphic designers bringing Spreepark (the park) to life. It'd be an orgy of Edmonton creativity, a lovechild

aised by the proverbial village.
 "When we got the grant, and we
 got the holy shit!" exclaims Watson.
 "Now we've got to make this hap-
 pen!"

If *Spreepark* (the play) began as an
 incredible aggregation of talent, like
 that sticky ball in *Katamari Damacy*, it
 just rolled on, enfolded more people
 as it rumbled through town.

"I met Eric last year at Sled Island,"
 Kennedy recounts. "I liked his set for
 the *Portraits* CD release, and emailed
 him: 'I'm going to have to hire you
 one day!' and he wrote back: 'How
 about I hire you?'. That was seven
 months ago."

Kennedy took the draft Watson had
 been working on and started casting
 immediately. Time constraints and the
 spirit of the project made it highly col-
 laborative, and the director wanted
 actors included as early as possible,
 especially the three principals.

Beanpole thespian Nick Green
 plays Fritz as a fastidious brainiac
 with a neurotic affection for
Spreepark (the park). His romantic
 interest/irritation Ralf, as played by
 Mathew Hulshoff, is a puppy-tough,
 soulful James Dean type who wan-
 ders into *Spreepark* full of restless
 mischief. Set in Watson's birth year,
 1984, and stuffed with genuine his-
 torical nerderie, in-jokes, musical
 references, vaudevillian slapstick and
 a plotline as charmingly addled as a
Scooby Doo episode reimagined by
 Wim Wenders, the play also demands
 an Evil Clown, and Kennedy tapped
 BFA student Mary Hulbert, who plays
 Evil Clown as a pansexual psycho
 schoolmarm, Bond villain and Bond
 girl rolled into one hot German-
 accented, gold lederhosen-ed pack-
 age. As befits a baddie, she steals the
 show, abetted by her cheerfully non-
 sensical Minions.

"We gave them autonomy over
 their characters and they came up
 with the Minion handshake, the way
 they interact, this bizarre language of
 their own that's principally swear
 words," Kennedy reveals. "Without
 knowing he did it, Marshall created
 wonderful clown characters in Evil
 Clown and the Minions. He wrote the



essence of clown: motivated by
 moment-by-moment desires and
 whims."

ID-DRIVEN CLOWNS ASIDE, music isn't
 just the source of *Spreepark*, but
 remains its animating force, through
 the Glockenspiel at the metaphoric
 and physical heart of the park (pieces
 of which are prime movers of the the-
 atrical mystery) and also via Matthew
 Skopyk's plot-advancing, character-
 developing score.

"There isn't a moment that's not
 underscored by music, if not straight-
 up musical," Watson notes. "Each
 band has different interpretations of
 the songs, and they each have their
 nights to play them, so every night
 will be different."

Kennedy's eyebrows shoot up. "I'm

terrified of the uncertainty," the direc-
 tor confesses. "Even though theatre's
 live and uncontrollable to an extent,
 you do as much to control everything
 as possible. We're adding people
 whose job it is to be unpredictable, to
 rock out, to be original and act in
 unexpected ways all the time. And
 we're asking them to get cues night
 after night. It terrifies me to the core."

She takes a deep breath. "But of
 course, it's going to work out. That
 live sound, as scary as hell as it is for
 me, is going to be amazing."

Watson gently reminds her, "That's
 why we love the project so much."

What's not to love? Music by six
 stellar Edmonton bands—a different
 pair per night—will likely draw folks
 who'd rarely or never go to the the-
 atre, but could be seduced by per-

formance and story; a notion Kennedy
 embraces enthusiastically. The bands
 are diverse enough (see
vuwweekly.com for their full story) to
 keep music fans returning over the
 three-evening run, and last month's
 release of the three-volume sound
 track stoked the fires of expectation.

Kennedy's concern is somewhat
 justified—the role of bands in
Spreepark is something that doesn't fit
 a template. They aren't part of the fur-
 niture, nor are they active except as
 generators of music. In a way, they
 exist as a personification of that ele-
 ment in *Spreepark*, a meta-character
 like the spirit of drama or art that per-
 vades the experience.

The only participant more fretful
 than Kennedy about the myriad ways
 everything can collapse into *scheiße* is

Cheng, who took on the role of imp-
 sario, ultimate caretaker of the sho-
 budget and producer of the soundtr-
 album, and one of the local arti-
 st developing the lavish lobby stylin-
 under set designer Josée Aubin-O-
 lette (of Institute Parachute, a novel
 org busily redefining visual encount-
 in the city).

In contrast to the spare perfor-
 mance set, the lobby will be elaborat-
 transformed into an installatio-
 echoing and building on the narrat-
 while staying true to its theme p-
vorfahr, being an oddball mix
 deception, craft and suggestion.
 be almost like being inside a ha-
 made video game, with participat-
 activities and encounters, and eve-
 short film.

"It's an over-the-top, embellish-
 aesthetic, but 2-D execution, delib-
 ately a little cheap, abstractions
 things and styles: a Bavarian Villa
 a gothic Glockenspiel, an enchan-
 forest, booths that are Bauhaus,"
 Cheng describe. "We
 trying to create the time peri-
 where Bauhaus was overtaking
 older folk aesthetic and use ref-
 erences that people can latch on
 but also make them say, 'What
 heck is going on?'"

This aspect of *Spreepark* is dee-
 wrapped in backstory by Wats-
 Cheng, and heroic multi-tasker T-
 Berkes, who contributed to the scr-
 choreographed the play and design-
 costumes and props.

Like the music, the visuals are
 entwined with the concept.
Spreepark they invoke a creative
 far beyond lines and palette. Draw-
 these three pieces of *Spreep-*
 together—music performance, art-
 an environment and experience th-
 both playful and culturally r-
 unleashes something wilder and u-
 mately more collaborative with
 audience: it's a newfangled extra-
 ganza of body, mind, and commu-
 ty—a 21st century meta-theme par-

"We want the audience to
 immersed in this world," Cheng c-
 cludes. "We want it to be as bel-
 able and credible as they want
 believe it is." ▽

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Springboards has sprung: Workshop's new play festival returns

L BLINOV / blinov@vancouverweekly.com

Springboards is back. After a one-year hiatus brought on due to Workshop West's then-administrative- and debt-related woes, the Springboards playwriting festival is once again ready to propel developing material into the public consciousness.

Financial troubles now behind Workshop West, artistic director Michael Clark is looking forward to bringing Edmonton a taste of what he's been reading over the past year.

"I read probably 150 plays a year: two or three plays a week. I try to stay on top of who's doing what," he says. "I previously couldn't get everybody in here, but I got as many as I could ... I would call it a selection of the plays I read."

Previously, Springboards has helped such acclaimed works like *SH'd* and *The Mighty Carlins* find their footing. Eleven works in progress will be presented to audiences—one full-length play and one short excerpt nightly—with an informal discussion to follow, based on questions posed to audiences that the playwrights themselves want answered.

"You can think of it as a glimpse into the future of Canadian theatre," Clark says.

Additionally, the first and last days of the festival will host the Pitch to Play contest, wherein budding playwrights have the chance to become part of Workshop West's playwriting unit, regardless of how established they may or may not be.

"If you want to be cheesy about it, it's almost like a playwright's reality

PREVIEW
SPRINGBOARDS
NEW PLAY FESTIVAL
 THIRD SPACE (11516 - 103 ST)
 PWYC (RECOMMENDED DONATION OF \$12)

game," he muses. "It's a selection process that's intended to be completely transparent and equal ... we audition playwrights the same way symphonies audition musicians."

Participants are given aliases, and first submit a three-line play pitch, which is read to a panel of judges and the audience on the festival's first night. The judges pick nine of the pitches, the audience choose one, and those selected, code-named playwrights have the rest of the week to prepare a scene to be presented on Springboard's closing evening. Five of the plays will then be chosen (one by the audience), and those playwrights will become part of Workshop West's playwriting unit for next season.

GUYS IN DISGUISE

Ben Hagin is a veteran participant in the Springboards. To him, any opportunity to gauge an early audience reaction is vital to the fine-tuning of a play.

"Any chance you can get to put some of your writing in front of an audience of any kind, to see how it lands is a valuable thing for a playwright," he says. "It just gives you that little heads-up that things are working or that things still need work. There's no other real way of telling that either, without actually doing it in front of some sort of audience or somebody listening."

He's presenting *2 Queens & a Joker*,



a three man collaboration with Trevor Schmidt and Nick Green that snatches Mary Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth I's rivalry from the pages of history and puts it in drag on a stage.

Although his script isn't quite ready

for full dress rehearsal—"Don't expect us to get in drag for a 20 minute reading," he laughs—he's come to cherish the audience preview of raw material that Springboards provides.

"I've learned to be fairly fearless

about it, because even if it doesn't go the way you want it to, the stuff you learn from that experience is going to totally help you down the road when you get to actually putting it up on stage." ▽

Love, love me don't: fragmentary *Crave* untangles relationships

L BLINOV / blinov@vancouverweekly.com

Thou shall not kill thyself. When Sarah Kane wrote the line into *Crave*, a jagged little meditation on love and power, she was still far away from tragically breaking at self-instilled commandment which she did shortly after finishing her final play, *4.48 Psychosis*.

So while her penultimate *Crave* does take a dark path, the dead-end isn't yet in sight, as its four characters nestle less with suicidal tendencies in the limits of their own relationships and individual failings—love turning into something far bleaker, not completely spoiled yet.

Sarah Van Tassel's well-thought production traces the downward spiral with a sense of vitality and immediacy. She's presented the stage directionless script by scattering the audience into a theatre of the round circle, and letting her actors run free around them.

This staging gives mostly perks: the actors are free to roam around and make eye contact with the audience collapse into empty seats beside them, and to watch each other and comment, playing a verbal jury to each other's wilting romances. Some of the most perplexing moments



come in this two up/ two sitting down set-up, as the blank-slate script gets gelled into little encounters

complete with commentary.

LIKE KANE'S OTHER WORKS, *Crave*

REVUE

UNTIL SUN, MAY 25 (8 PM)
CRAVE
 DIRECTED BY SARAH VAN TASSEL
 WRITTEN BY SARAH KANE
 STARRING CANDACE BERLINGUETTE,
 DENNY DEMERIA, CODY PORTER, MARISSA WIFFEN
 THIRD SPACE (11516 - 103 ST), \$14 - \$16

pulls no punches, with both pedophilia and rape coming up within the first few minutes. But like everything in the script, such moments are mentioned as snippets, snapshots of a fractured relationship that don't last more than a few moments. But the actors lend these fleeting moments some unsettling weight, and paired quips like "I fucking miss you" and "I miss fucking you" are delivered in ways that effectively cement the script's scattered thoughts with the tug of compelling emotion.

Occasionally, the blocking feels like movement for movement's sake, and lines get tossed away into the void as the actors, clad all in white, bustle around from place to place. But the actors mostly manage to hold it down.

Cody Porter in particular creates a strange draw with the way he delivers his pile of lines; he's not overly

emotional, but remains gripping nonetheless. Watching him plead his desires for a circling lover, which build up into beautiful confessions only to tumble back down into demands for power, is easily the show's peaking moment. They come together, they break apart, and it's riveting to watch.

Candace Berlinguette also carries her parts with valuable emotional weight, and Marissa Wiffen and Denny Demeria at the very least hit moments of connection, even if they don't completely maintain them throughout *Crave*.

At less than an hour, *Crave* runs short, but that's as long as is necessary for what's simply a cut n' paste collection of recollections, regrets and loss. The little lines stick in your mind.

This also marks the first production of Van Tassel's new Guts & Guile production company, an experimental theatre, one that allows its audience to connect personally with the production." Fittingly, it's a challenging play to a place where any and all can gander at its beautiful fallout. It sets the company's standard as one worth following along with. ▽

A play you won't forget



Near the beginning of Bernard Pomerance's Tony Award-winning *The Elephant Man*,

there's a scene in which the grossly deformed Joseph Merrick's condition is explained at length by Frederick Treves, the London doctor who rescued him from the purgatory of a back-street freak show. Actor Frank Zotter, standing nearly naked on centre stage, plays Merrick. Treves (George Szilagyi) is explaining the "cauliflower-like" growths of skin down Merrick's back, and the swells and tumours on his head that make it measure almost the circumference of a normal man's waist. As the audience is forced to contemplate the hideousness of Merrick's appearance, Zotter stays stock still, curly blond hair ringing a square jawed face, muscular swimmer's build erect and poised. I don't know if it was intentional or not, but the resemblance here is more to Michelangelo's "David" than to a man who was possibly the ugliest-known specimen of the human species—ever.

As the scene proceeds though, Zotter hunches his back, contorts his face into a pained grimace, and his right arm hang beside him, useless and dead. The rest of the play, and it's the extent of his physical transformation into the elephant man. Merrick, in this play, is not ugly which is more than can be said for some of the people around him.

The Elephant Man is a play about vanity but it's not Merrick's. As Merrick becomes a figure of sympathy in London high society, he receives visits from a famous London actress and British royalty, and piques the sympathy of the British people enough that they send enough money to keep him in the Royal London Hospital, in Treves' care, for the rest of his life.

But as Pomerance's script takes pains to express, Merrick is a sort of humor in which everyone ends up seeing the best of themselves. Treves sees in Merrick's intelligence and curiosity himself as a young man. The hospital pastor sees his own struggles with faith. The actress Mrs Kendall sees a fellow misfit, and when Merrick laments that he's never seen a naked woman before, she even takes her clothes off for him. Is this a moment of communion between the two, or is she simply getting off on being admired? The question hangs. (Amusingly, Merrick—unofficially the ugliest man in the

PREVIEW

UNTIL SAT, MAY 24 (7:30 PM)
THE ELEPHANT MAN
BY BERNARD POMERANCE
DIRECTED BY MICHAEL PENG, STARRING FRANK ZOTTER, GEORGE SZILAGYI
TIMMS CENTRE FOR THE ARTS (87 AVE & 112 ST)
\$10 - \$20

world—turns out to be pretty picky about his tastes in women, dismissing certain of them as variously "too old and "too thin." But hell, why shouldn't he have standards too?)

ZOTTER'S MERRICK will be familiar to anyone who's seen the 1980 film version of the story—he's an intelligent, sensitive young man who seems to take his incredible misfortune with surprising good grace. Szilagyi's Treves is excellent as well, a man whose faith in the rationality and coherence of the scientific world crumble the closer he gets to Merrick.

Director Michael Peng's production is, bar none, the best I've seen at Studio Theatre. An economical and evocative stage design allows the actors space to roam while setting up the play's various themes nicely. And this is the first show I've seen in Edmonton that manages to employ rear-projection successfully. In the past couple of seasons, I've probably seen a dozen good plays half-ruined by overwrought Powerpoint presentations and other multimedia "enhancements." But Peng manages to use his multimedia projection to subtly accentuate the text. (Though there are occasionally written quotations projected onto the back wall of the stage that aren't readable from the side of the theatre, being obscured by other parts of the set.)

I've always liked that Studio Theatre is liable to take on the classics, but always been a little frustrated that, as a student theatre, its productions are hit and miss. *The Elephant Man*, on the other hand, does eminent justice to its source material. A great way to end the season, and a major accomplishment for all involved. ▽



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Jack Handey is still deep in thought

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vueweekly.com

Despite the fake-sounding name and the assumptions of millions of *Saturday Night Live* viewers in the '90s, Jack Handey is a real person. There's even a picture of him on the jacket of his latest book, a collection of the comic essays (many of which have appeared in *The New Yorker* or *Outside*) he's moved on to write since his time in heavy meditation with the NBC sketch show. (Along with some of his SNL scripts and reprints of some Fuzzy Memories, the choicest of Handey's infamous Deep Thoughts are reprinted here: "I believe in making the world safe for our children, but not our children's children, because I don't think children should be having sex").

What sets Handey apart from so many other comic writers is his wry, dry tone and his rich development of a particularly American, dummy-meets-big thinker persona. Handey's not interested in pop-culture parodying or political satire but in daffy existential doodles, naïveté that balloons into unthinking hubris and the explosion of a seemingly one-note joke into an opera of absurdity.

Take the title story, probably the most brilliant piece here. It opens with the narrator declaring, "People of Mars, you say we are brutes and savages. But let me tell you one thing: if I could get loose from this cage you have me in, I would tear you guys a new Martian asshole."

HUMOUR

WHAT I'D SAY TO THE
MARTIANS AND OTHER
VEILED THREATS

BY JACK HANDEY

170 PP, \$16.25

This passive-aggressive diatribe streams on, only confirming the Martians' conclusions about human violence. And what's more appropriate in this xenophobic Bush era than petty, juvenile lash-outs and a bitter refusal to talk peacefully—or even maturely—with any stranger? Our raging captive doesn't just hate difference but needs to assert superiority: "For fun, we humans like to ski down mountains covered with snow; you like to 'milk' bacteria off of scum hills and pack them into your gill slits. So are we so different? Of course we are, and you will be even more different if I ever finish my homemade flame thrower."

THIS COLLECTION showcases the full flowering of Handey's cleverly crafted, so-stupid-it's-still-not-smart narrative voice. There's the persona's mostly clueless, wide-eyed, American self-aggrandizement ("The Legend of Me," "Lowering My Standards"). He's a kindergarten philosopher, ruminating haplessly on "How Things Even Out" or warning that "This Is Not A Game." Or he's extolling the miracle of the human body in all its metaphors—it's "the most perfect musical instrument... except for the tuba sounds."

He's a counsellor full of self-belief, amongst other things, offering his "Ideas for Paintings" (*Stampede of Nudes*) or his script for the most anthropomorphic, contrived nature documentary imaginable. The fake Jack Handey can casually talk about his wife as "My Third-Best Friend" or let slip some bitterness about his pal Don.

Little here is unfunny. At least one piece, "Einstein and Capone," is a previously unpublished gem of comic



juxtaposition and '20s slang-parody. Scientist meets gangster in a world where, as the Chicago criminal says, "'With your brains and my muscle, we'll be unstoppable.'"

In "Reintroducing Me To My Habitat," Handey pleads to be returned to his wild home, "because I believe that until people can sit around a desert campfire and go, 'Shh, hear that?' and then listen for the plaintive howl of me,

we as a society have lost something. The real Jack Handey's found his niche and filled it, as this book shows nearly every page, and society's won "something" with this book, that's what I'd say. What is that something? Well, at the very least, in "Tattoo," a story of a man more concerned about a mysterious tattoo not being removed than the sex changes she somehow keeps getting. ▼

FROM THE PRODUCERS WHO BROUGHT YOU **BEFULLMONTY**Smart, Articulate & VERY, VERY Funny...for both men and women
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Martin Morrow, Calgary Straight

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No longer a little kid, Children's Fest still shines

According to Troy Funk, marketing manager for the International Children's Festival, the event is still opening the minds of children by exposing them to culture and art.

"It's unique to introduce children to opportunities and the arts," Funk says over the phone from his office, working on some last-minute preparations for the venerable festival.

The festival started out in Edmonton 27 years ago and moved to St Albert in 1994, where it has continued to "bring smiles to children's faces" for the last 14 years. This year's festival runs from May 27 to May 31, and will again feature diverse traditions and cultures, with visual and literary artists from France, West Africa, Germany, Japan, Scotland, USA and Canada. In addition to watching performances, kids can do activities such as Métis weaving, making paper cranes, juggling, storytelling and more.

Of course, for Funk, the festival is about a lot more than just entertainment. The activities and performances are closely connected to what is being taught in schools, giving children an opportunity to get out of the traditional setting to see history and culture come alive, all while getting involved by doing activities.

It's a clever way of kids coming

PREVIEW TUE, MAY 27 - SAT, MAY 31
INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL
VARIOUS LOCATIONS, ST ALBERT, \$8.50 - \$10

out of the classroom and getting entertained," says Funk.

THE INTERNATIONAL Children's Festival has grown over the years and so has the budget, jumping from \$250,000 to \$1.2 million. The main stage changes every year, but in recent years organizers have tried to get some of the more popular acts to come back. Despite the fact it's now a well-established event in Edmonton's summer festival season, Funk emphasizes that they try to keep things fresh an exciting every year.

"At this point it is keeping the activities fresh and enjoyable for the kids," Funk says.

Don't let the name throw you off, though: the festival is aimed at children but can be enjoyed by all ages—there's just a different interpretation that comes along with the different ages of the audience.

"It is enjoyed by adults and children—it's just on different levels," says Funk. "Some artists are a once in a lifetime opportunity to see and I think adults get as much out of it as the kids do."

The quotidian quest of living your life NATHAN WHITLOCK'S DEBUT GIVES US A WEEK OF THIS

DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com

Big-box stores on the edges of towns, abandoned houses aging into oblivion, dingy, abused offices without windows, empty, tundra-like fields surrounded by chainlink and staring up indifferently at a sky threatening winter: this is the world of Nathan Whitlock's *A Week of This*, a novel of unsentimentalized small-town Canadiana, focusing on the people in the backgrounds of Tim Horton's commercials, those who just want to get their goddamned double-double and be on their way.

Though it takes place in the expanse of central Ontario, *A Week of This* captures any town where secondhand trucks and teenaged hockey players dominate. The novel most closely follows Manda, a 38-year-old, formerly rebellious woman who—despite hating the place since she was forced to move there as a teen—still hasn't managed to pick up and leave her adopted hometown of Dunbridge. Joining her in this quotidian purgatory are her husband Patrick, whose sporting goods store in the mall would be an escape, if the ever-present threat of failure didn't constantly bring him back to the real world, her half-brother Marcus, who's attempting to make it through life and a budding relationship while doing as little work as possible, and her brother Ken, a slower-than-average shelf-stocker still living out the trauma inflicted by his and Manda's wigged-out mother.

Their lives are, with the possible exception of that mother, almost entirely unremarkable, spared even of the tragic nobility that writers—especially CanLit writers—like to inflict on their working class char-

CANLIT **A WEEK OF THIS:**
A NOVEL IN SEVEN DAYS
BY NATHAN WHITLOCK
ECW PRESS
264 PP, \$26.95

acters. As the title suggests, these are merely people slogging through another week, their minds occupied with questions no grander than whether they should be eating Chinese buffet again, what they're going to do about the hole in the roof, whether or not their new girl friend's son is getting along with them. Whitlock strikes an able balance between desperation and the comfort of the settled life, each character not exactly happy with their lot in Dunbridge, but not exactly sure exactly what would be better. As such, their day to day is filled with the kind of situations that are as mundane as they are crucial, the necessary bits of life allowed to take on their full drama.

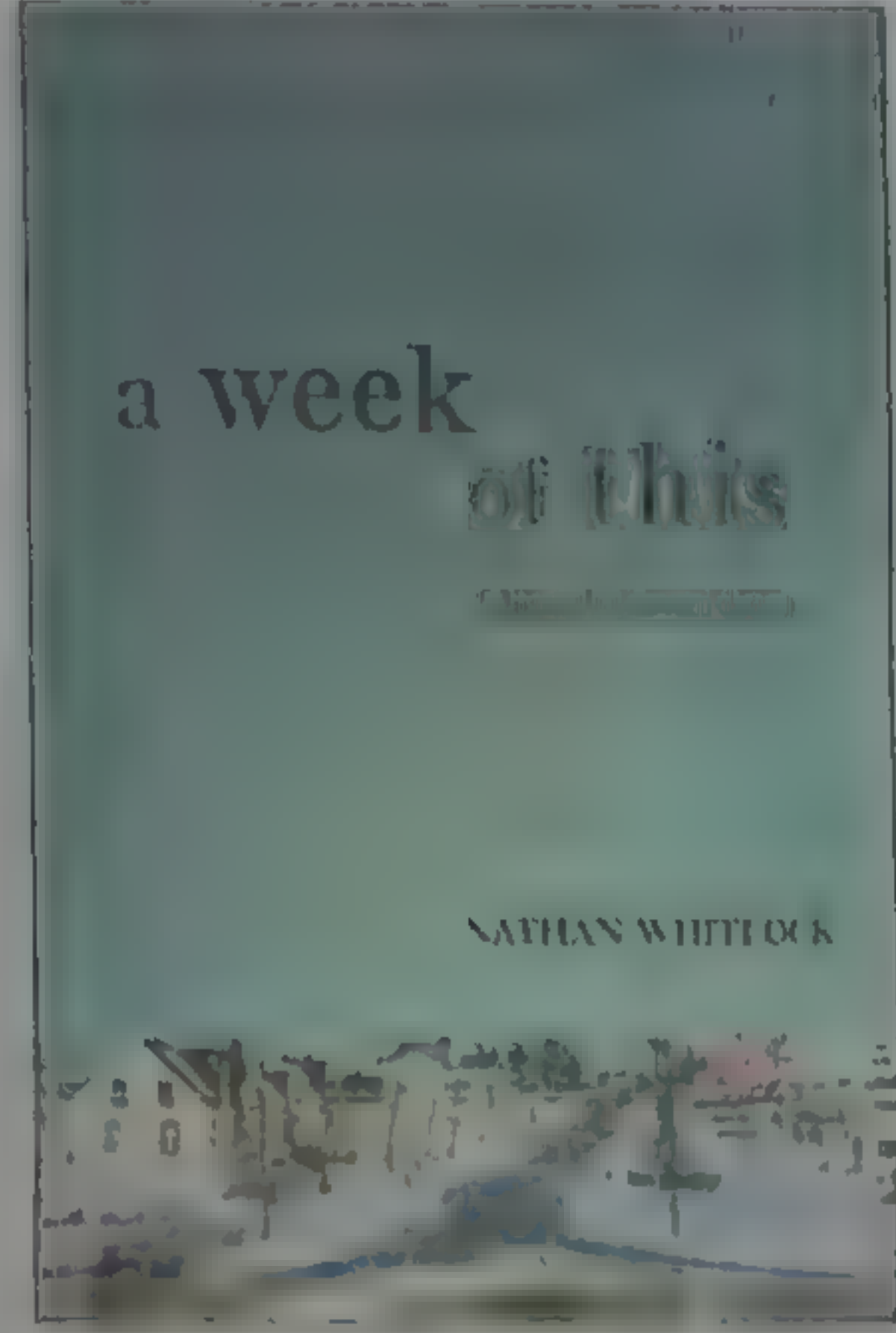
WHITLOCK'S GREATEST strength is that he manages to restrain both his judgements of and his sympathy for his characters, allowing them to play out, equal parts warts and smiles. Manda is sometimes a shrew, sometimes a tragic hero, oftentimes noth-

ing more than an aging woman wondering if she's doing it right, trapped like all of us between duty and desire, lofty expectations and stark realities.

As refreshing as his subject matter is, Whitlock isn't without his annoying tendencies as a writer. He reads very much like someone whose job it is to read CanLit—his day job is review editor at *Quill & Quire*, after all—and though he's aware (and teisty) enough to take a few shots at some of the sacred cows, he can't entirely escape its grasp like a lot of people raised on a diet of Atwood and Ondaatje, he seems to labour under the impression that metaphors and similes are necessary to the construction of a paragraph, and though he's got some talent with

them, the sheer number of unnecessary-if-clever literary twitches quickly become rote: almost workmanlike turns of phrase.

Still, it's not enough to diminish what he's done here: *A Week of This* is a compelling, sharply detailed picture of a part of the Canadian landscape that is at best stereotyped, and at worst ignored completely. From the mundane, Whitlock has pulled something refreshing and beautiful, something we can say about far too few Canadian writers today.



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Keeping pulp fiction all about the masses

BOOKS **HOPSCOTCH**
JOYF REASON
hopscotch@vuwweekly.com

When we talk about vintage pulp fiction, we talk about how it's presented. We actually refer to it by its published format. There are purists who scoff at the re-packaging of pulp fiction in prestige editions, the idea being that you're not getting the full experience if you read *Rendezvous in Black* or *The Postman Always Rings Twice* or *Dark Passage* on acid-free paper bound in leather. The argument is simultaneously compelling and degrading. There is indeed something appealing about consuming material deemed lowbrow or excessively sanguine by the elite in the same cheap, disposable paperbacks as their original consumers. But those original paperbacks now sell for luxury prices. Ironically, they are now valuable antiques.

Furthermore, if this material is worth revisiting, if it may even be great literature, then why shouldn't it be reprinted in formats designed to endure? Why let these books perish in the literary ghetto? I discovered the great hard-boiled pulps I've grown to adore in the gaudy but sturdily bound Black Lizard trade paperbacks of the 1980s and '90s—editions that have now also become collector's items. I still regularly scour used bookstores trying to hunt down some new-to-me title in this noble imprint, only to balk at the price. In the end, all I really care about is being able to actually read these books, to have the opportunity to find forgotten gems and keep the established masterpieces available to all. So I was very happy to recently discover Millipede Press, a publisher out of Lakewood, Colorado, who've been resurrecting some superb crime fiction in editions that run the gamut from limited edition deluxe boxed hardcovers to trades that'll only put you out about \$13.

I'd never heard of *The Deadly Percheron*, nor of its author John Franklin Bardin. It was Jonathan Lethem, who wrote the new introduction to Millipede's reprint, and that got me intrigued. *The Deadly*

Percheron is a masterwork of amnesia fiction, a genre Lethem coined and defined in *The Vintage Book of Amnesia*, his anthology featuring the likes of Nabokov, Murakami and Philip K. Dick. Lethem wanted to include *The Deadly Percheron* in the anthology in its entirety, but for obvious reasons this proved impractical. Thanks to Millipede, however, it has a new life.

A psychiatrist interviews a new patient who tells him of leprechauns who pay him to perform strange antics. The psychiatrist accompanies the patient to a bar to meet one of his employers, who turns out to be, apparently, nothing more than a fanciful midget. But that very night an actress is murdered and the patient becomes a suspect. The psychiatrist tries to help, but soon finds himself led into the New York subway and knocked unconscious. Next thing he knows he's in a mental hospital, badly scarred and taken for a tramp. Months have passed. The man he used to be is reportedly dead, his widow moved away. Gradually the one-time shrink comes to accept his new identity and lives an exceedingly humble life as a soda jerk working the graveyard shift in some Coney Island joint. He's oddly content. Until his past catches up with him.

The finale is a little too wrapped up, disappointing in the way the finales of a lot of great film noirs are disappointing—but the getting-there is more than worth it. I can recall very few stories where the labyrinth of amnesia is more fraught with strange detours of multiple meaning. The scene in which the hero feels he's being chased down a dark street: is he being chased by his past self? The rumpled nighthawk with whom this once respectable professional takes up with: is she really just another

factor in his transient life or in fact an embodiment of a repressed desire to flee his "real" life? *The Deadly Percheron* feels less like conventional crime fiction than a precursor to the films of David Lynch.

Roland Topor's *The Tenant*, a book I've wanted to read ever since I first saw Roman Polanski's wickedly disturbing film version, has also received the Millipede treatment in an edition featuring the author's enigmatic illustrations, some long out-of-print short stories, and an introduction by Thomas Ligotti. In its way, *The Tenant* is also a sort of amnesia tale: the protagonist gradually losing his sense of identity until it becomes fully fused with that of the suicidal woman who'd previously inhabited his two-room Paris apartment. Written with cool detachment, the narrative trajectory recalls Paul Bowles' "A Distant Episode," with the considerable difference that the true culprits behind the protagonist's psychological breakdown remain entirely ambiguous to the very end.

Our protagonist initially seems exceedingly normal, only slowly revealing Kafkaesque tendencies toward appointed guilt and sexual anxiety. The imagery surrounding his sense of being persecuted is uniformly vaginal: the oval bath room window he watches from his apartment; the single eye visible on the face of the heavily bandaged previous tenant, and her screaming mouth; holes hidden in walls and doors with doors; everywhere cavities await and threaten. Topor's narrative feels at once inevitable and lined with shock, a chilling exploration of mental corrosion and how we come to terms with what constitutes self. In an inspired choice, Millipede's edition features a Topor illustration of a figure without a face. ▀

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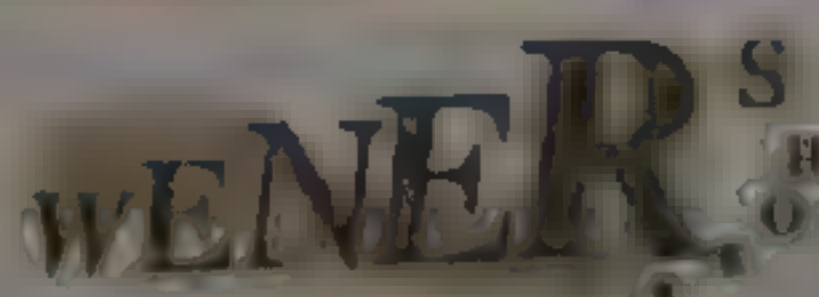
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ARTS

Chow down: *CJ7* tweaks family film clichés to middling success

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vnewweekly.com

From hulking green or iron men to speed-racers or demonic motorcycle-riders, Hollywood's been flipping through the comic books more and more for inspiration or, at least, adaptation. With plasticine arms and flame-fired bodies, such characters—more figurines than figures—aren't only made for today's F/X-driven blockbusters, but they can entertain the kids while making adults still feel okay to bring their own inner child out again even if it's just to keep him in the darkness of a cineplex for two hours).

That's what makes Stephen Chow's *CJ7* so interesting, for all its flaws—here's a film geared more obviously to kids, but an often surprisingly dark adult sensibility keeps bringing the fun and games down to earth.

Chow's previous film, *Kung Fu Hustle*, was a roller-coaster that sucked us in, down, and whipped us around a near-*Looney Tunes* world of slam-bang, ka-pow martial-arts action. But how didn't stop there, throwing in cinematic allusions, in-jokes and outlandish characters. It was auteur meets mainstream—wild West, rebellious filmmaking that faced off against genre conventions and won.

Given Chow's penchant for over-the-top action scenes and effects-grounded (but not effects-driven) scenes, it's little surprise he'd be drawn to the more naturally elastic expressions of kids' faces and the opportunity to make a faintly *T* film where the alien looks like a furer, cuter version of *Stitch* from *Lilo*



COMEDY

FRI, MAY 23 - SUN, MAY 26 (7 PM)
CJ7
DIRECTED BY STEPHEN CHOW
WRITTEN BY CHOW, CHI KEUNG FUNG,
VINCENT KOK, SANDY SHAW, KAN-CHEUNG TSANG
STARRING JIAO XU, STEPHEN CHOW
METRO CINEMA, \$10
★★★

and *Stitch*.

But Chow soon chews up and spits out any other Spielberg or Disney elements, quickly making the film his own. He does so through a curious, often compelling mix of threat and safety—even the poop jokes here are more realistically awful and yet more

cartoonishly laughable.

DICKY CHOW (Jiao Xu) seems a pitiable, Dickensian child, nearly shoeless and so grimy that his private school's uptight teacher won't touch him. The taint of poverty seems to cling to him—his snotty classmates want nothing to do with this boy whose "coolie" father (Chow himself) sweats away in the heat and heights of a low-paying construction job to give his son a good education. School and job site are charged with their own dangers: bullying kids and snapping teacher, little workplace safety and a cantankerous boss.

So when the dog-like alien shows up, answering Dicky's wish for a cool new toy, the cuteness seems ready to kick in—after all, *CJ7* has those big, expressive animé eyes, a furry head and his antenna wags like a tail. But a flickering, forked green tongue is slightly sinister, and the way he's treated is often disturbing. Grief rears its awful head, too, another element taken further in its realism than this genre usually allows. Sacrifice predominates—Dicky's father slaves away for his son and *CJ7* can only reanimate things by sapping himself of life.

Dicky himself—played with remark-

able, scene-stealing expressiveness by Xu, though the child actor who plays the unctuous rich kid at his school is just as good—is often an unlikeable child. His usually kind father's occasional lapses into frustration, even some harsh physical scolding, inject the film with some more of that intriguing darkness, but Dicky's wilfulness is just as startlingly realistic. He's pouty, abusive (angrily near-drowning *CJ7*), spiteful and imperious ("Rubbish dog from space! You're low-tech and boring"). In short, Dicky's an adult in training.

But for all of *CJ7*'s reflections of a capricious kids' world (enemies one day and friends the next because, ultimately, adult authority is the main foe—"We don't discuss our business with adults"), the plot feels haphazard—the sense of play here could use a more direction. And while no guys get their girls, this is, as with most comics, too male a world. Chow still has an eye for great shots, particularly using the low, oppressed child's point-of-view nicely, but some scenes get too ridiculous (as when Dicky's tossed into a distant tree by a boy who's like *Hulk Jr.*).

The film soars into fantasy in order to plunge into real pathos, but it can't quite pull off these highs and lows without seeming a little too manic, a touch unbalanced. Always intriguing but not always fully involving, *CJ7* still features, as with its resurrecting dog, Chow's enlivening touch. Even when his film isn't completely absorbing, it seems he never met a dying genre cliché he can't reanimate. ♥

Cannes Weerasethakul be the best director you've never seen?

DVDetective

BRIAN GIBSON
dvdetective@vnewweekly.com

As that gaudy, artsy emperor of film festivals, Cannes, winds down this week, the jury will decide who walks off the various prizes, particularly the coveted Palme d'Or. One of the arbiters is Thai director Pichatpong Weerasethakul, whose second and third films, after their prize-winning debuts at the French fest, quickly made him a top cinémathèque name. Less conventional than fellow Thai New Wave rector Pen-Ek Ratanaruang (whose crime films include *Sixty-nine* and *Last Life in the Universe*), Weerasethakul is sort of the nematic equivalent of Sigur Ros, making post-plot, alt-art remix films.

They've hardly been shown in this city, though, and they're even hard to find on DVD. His most recent is *Syndromes and a Century* (Strand), which has finally popped into at least one store in Edmond, albeit quietly onto their World Cine-

ma backshelves. It deserves the acclaim it got from those who did manage to see it on screens last year—there is a strange cinematic mood here that settles slowly and sways gently (like the strummed guitar chords and leafy tree branches in key scenes), gradually seeping into your skin.

Another sign of an assured auteur is rhythm, and Weerasethakul definitively has a pace all his own. Seemingly casual yet strictly composed, the shots here, mostly in hospitals, offer poetic slices—slide samples of everyday life. And yet the lives of the few people followed here are imbued with a peculiar, particular power, a mysterious weight.

This quiet, observational force ("No matter what we do, something always watches us") begins from the first frame, where a surgeon (Jaruchai Lamaram) is being interviewed by a doctor (Nantarat Sawddikul) at a hospital. There's a curious stillness around the conversation. Some questions seem relevant, others more cryptic. So begins an undercurrent tension between medical and meditative,

physical and spiritual, even mechanical and mystical, that almost imperceptibly sweeps the film along. In her consultation room, that interviewing doctor, Dr Toey, talks to a monk about his aches. The monk feels that the spirits of chickens have possessed him after he was cruel to them as a child—in a sense, he's right, according to her, for she diagnoses an excess of uric acid in his system from eating too much poultry. But then the slightly cranky religious man diagnoses her, sensing confusion in her heart about money matters and giving her an ancestral herbal potion for it.

THIS FIRST HALF, set mostly in a rural hospital, offers spare, calm scenes: slats of light in white, orderly rooms, with green ferns and palms just beyond the windows. (The jungle growth here, as in the director's previous film, seems to suggest an ever-present, lush sense of new possibility about to burst forth.) People talk, far away, as the camera looks out on an open field. A monk in saffron robes lies in a chair, a dentist

working on his mouth.

The second half is made a little more eerie by the pipes, vents and scattered artificial limbs in various rooms of an even more modern, urban hospital. (The director's own explanation is that the two halves are set 40 years apart.) This is where the remix happens—a switchback to the first half, only to knife away again. Words and scenes (particularly the interview and the diagnosis) from the first half faintly reverberate, but the shots and angles, questions and replies are always at least a little different. There's the Buddhist notion of reincarnation or soul transmigration here, the first life of the film returning in a second, distantly mirroring version. To say much more would be to risk breaking the film's lingering spell. *Syndromes and a Century* is not a movie for everyone, maybe not even most, but if you let yourself be pulled into its curious orbit, then re-orbit, its strange symmetries, poetic reflections and even the score's musical murmurs are entrancing. The trailer alone—the only disc extra—is an oddly mesmerizing bit of

work; unfortunately, the feature is offered in a bad transfer, filling out the whole screen and slightly sheared off at the edges.

A poor image transfer also bedevils Strand's release of Weerasethakul's third film, too. *Tropical Malady* (Strand), winner of the top prize at the Un Certain Regard part of the 2004 Cannes festival, is also a strange, enthralling tale that's split in two. The first part involves a soldier, Keng (Banlop Lomnoi), and his romance with Tong (Sakda Kaewbuadee) in a rural outpost; the second is about a soldier (Lomnoi again) stalked by a tiger shaman in the forest. The DVD offers a number of special features: a photo gallery and a director's commentary, including Weerasethakul's explanation of the little link between this film and his previous, *Blissfully Yours*. And in case anyone thinks that these wondrously strange films may just be the director's improvisation of scenes from a fever dream he had the night before, there are sketched-out storyboards and even some deleted scenes. ♥

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Angels in Canada: Stone succeeds, despite pressure

The sacred task in adapting *The Stone Angel* to the screen is in many cultural perspectives, not to that of *Lord of the Rings*, which is a bit of a stretch to say a parallel between the two. These texts by Margaret Laurence's late-lover Canadian novel, but all three stories share the diverse weight of the pressures breathing down the neck of the filmmakers to satisfyingly adapt the sternly gathered memories of old Hagar to the screen. Can Lit professors, librarians, widowed aunties and, of course, high school students too lazy to read the book the night before an exam, all depend on screenwriter-director Kari Skogland to recreate their own personal encounter with Laurence's tragic, emotionally violent yet life-affirming words.

DRAMA

OPENS FRI, MAY 23
THE STONE ANGEL
WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN AND DIRECTED BY KARI SKOGLAND
STARRING ELLEN BURSTYN, CHRISTINE HORNE, KEVIN ZEGERS, ELLEN PAGE
★★★★

All right, I've just started reading it for the first time. But I'm luckily familiar with the book's resonance in the hearts of Canadian readers, and nonetheless struck by Skogland's traditional though nonetheless intoxicating film that draws awe from its phenomenal cast including Ellen Burstyn, newcomer Christine Horne, Kevin Zegers and Ellen Page. The story, following the determined-yet-confused 90-year-old woman Hagar (Burstyn) as she escapes from her doting family to the house in which she raised a family, is also bumped up from the mid-'60s to

present day, shifting the dramatically re-created memories so that they kick of in the 1930s.

WHILE HER SON MARVIN (Dylan Baker) and his wife Doris (Sheila McCarthy) begin to panic, convinced her disappearance is a result of her recent book-into an assisted-living home, Hagar drifts quietly to the past. Her younger self (Horne, in a brilliant, youthful recreation of Hagar in both looks and gesture) is seduced by the charms of horse enthusiast Bram (Cole Hauser), despite the protest of her parents who front the powerful Currie family in the small town of Manawaka. But Hagar marries him, and as a result, loses her father's blessing and subsequent inheritance. That doesn't stop her from passing down the proud family name to her second son John (Zegers) in the form of a crest-branded kilt pin

The memories continue all the way down the road, even as old Hagar encounters a romantically troubled local in the abandoned house. She shares with him, in a wry sense of humour portrayed effortlessly by Burstyn, her eventual split from an alcoholic Bram to a career as a maid which, later in life, is cut off by the necessity to return to her sick and ailing husband back in Manawaka. More tragedy ensues, and as old Hagar returns to the past, she gathers both pain and realization of her life as a strong-headed woman, of which feels unseen by her son.

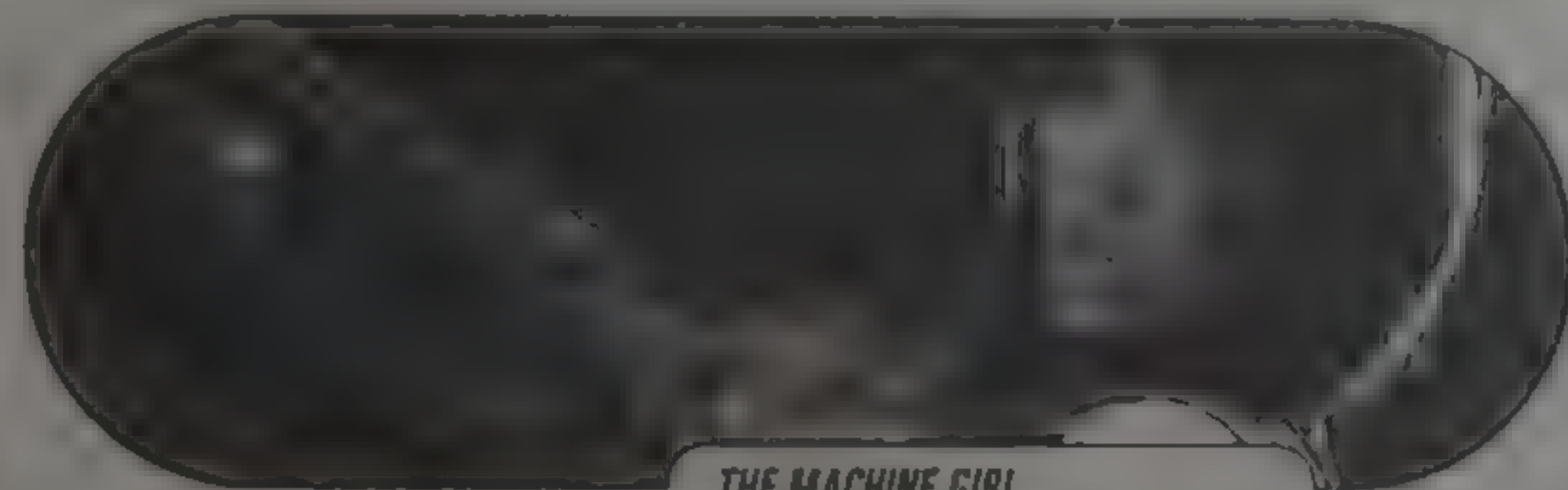
The team of Burstyn and Horne, in embodying the role of Hagar, sweep past Meryl Streep and her daughter Mamie (who tried the young/old character portrayal in last year's *Evening*), as they share what is perhaps *The Stone Angel's* greatest charm. In the realist sense, I rarely

forgot that Hagar's story was being told by two different women, though they share an intense, emotional plane which, at points, elevates the method of storytelling to share the creative roost with Laurence's novel

"They were looking for somebody who looked like her," Horne shared in a brief interview last week, "but I think that was secondary. Ellen started shooting first, and I hung out on set and watched her. I tried to absorb her without trying to do an impersonation of her."

Horne not only studied Burstyn's dailies, but also Burstyn's previous work in films like *The Last Picture Show* and *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. Like these hard-nosed melodramas of the 1970s, *The Stone Angel* spares romanticized sentiment in favour of detailing the life of a tough (though fictional) Canadian broad who lives with a certainty of individuality and determination. ▼

QUICK REVIEWS FILM CAPSULES



THE MACHINE GIRL

OPENING THIS WEEK

THE MACHINE GIRL
WRITTEN BY KENJI YAMASHITA
DIRECTED BY KENJI YAMASHITA
STARRING MINASE YASHIRO
FRI, MAY 23, 9 PM
RATED MA 15+
★★★★

MATTHEW HALLIDAY / matthew@vuwweekly.com
"If there's any way to get revenge without killing people, I'd like to hear it," says a character midway through Japanese horror/exploitation flick and unremitting gorefest *The Machine Girl*. And that pretty much sums it up.

Sometimes porn actress Minase Yashiro stars as Ami, a schoolgirl whose brother is killed by a vicious schoolyard gang—the leader of which is the son of a preposterously, impossibly evil Yakuza mob boss. When Ami seeks revenge for her brother's death, she unwittingly takes on the whole Yakuza clan. After losing her left arm in an early battle scene, she's rescued by a good-hearted mechanic who lost his own son to the same bullies Ami's brother was done in by. The mechanic fashions a replacement arm for her, a limb-cum-machine gun that makes Rose McGowan's firearm appendage in *Planet Terror* look like a six-shooter.

Of course, the "plot" is just an excuse to get to the gore, and nobody does horror-flick over-the-top exploitation flicks as well as the Japanese. For such a civil, peace-loving nation (fun fact: Tokyo has the lowest murder rate of any "Alpha" city in the world), Japan produces a disproportionate share of disturbing cultural flotsam and jetsam. *The Machine Girl* is a J-horror, meaning the more extreme permutations of anime shows what I mean. Is it the collectively repressed id of a nation of workaholics whose only socially acceptable outlet is enthusiastic karaoke? Who knows, but it does mean that we get to see a film in

which a girl's arm is fried into an enormous stick of tempura, in which a man eats sushi topped with his own severed fingers and in which a mother discovers her son's severed head floating in a pot of miso soup. All in the name of fun, of course.

The special effects are awful—blood sprays from severed limbs as if from high-pressure showerheads, and a scene in which a man is sliced to pieces with throwing stars is almost unforgivably phony (but then, could it be otherwise?). Still, you have to give writer/director Noburu Iguchi credit for gall.

Machine Girl is a must-see for local exploitation fans, if only because we don't get the chance to see many of these movies on the big screen. Still, one wishes the revenge fantasy plot had been a little better fleshed out. When Ami runs through the streets after her first kill, shouting, "I'm a demon! I turned into a demon!," you know, I just didn't quite believe it. Even if she did hollow out a man's face with a spray of bullets a few minutes later.

SON OF RAMBOW
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY GARTH JENNINGS
STARRING WILL POULTER, BILL MILNER
★★★★

DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com
Superficially, there's an awful lot in common between Michel Gondry's *Be Kind Rewind* and British production duo Hammer & Tongs' (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) *Son of Rambow*: both are, after all, about a pair of outsiders who stake a claim on pop culture by creating their own version of a blockbuster movie (or in *Rewind's* case, movies). But while *Rambow* ably carves out its own niche, using a private sequel to *First Blood* to explore the tumults of childhood friendship and trying to fit in, there's another important connection:

both films, like the tributes that play out within them, go more for capturing a feeling, a fleeting expression, than telling a tightly woven story.

Rambow follows two boys, outsiders on opposite ends of the spectrum: the trouble-making Lee (Will Poulter) and the imaginative but strictly reigned-in Will (Bill Milner). They meet in the hallway at school while being removed from class for separate reasons, Lee because he's pissed off his teacher (again), Will because his strict religious upbringing won't let him watch the documentary his class will stare at slack-jawed. A clandestine viewing of a bootlegged *First Blood* while hiding at Lee's house kicks Will's imagination into a new, fighting-and-explosions-themed direction, and the pair sets off to make Will's sequel, complete with evil scarecrow, flying dog and a bevy of low-rent stunts.

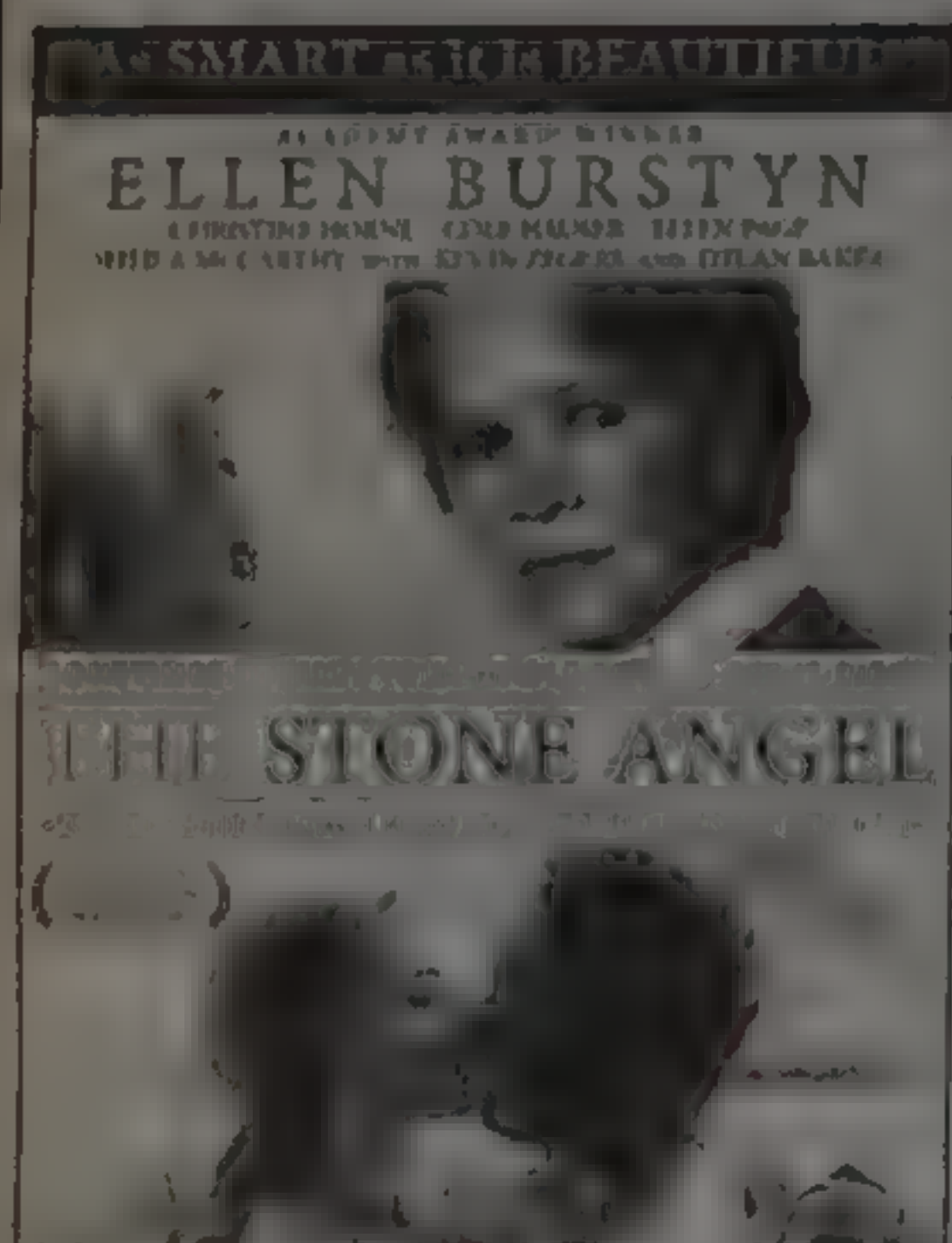
Though somewhat ramshackle, *Rambow* does an exceptional job of capturing the spirit of childhood, particularly the exuberance, as yet untouched by experience, and the raw, brutal hurt of life's first disappointments. Will is almost all creativity waiting for a chance to express itself, and he finds the perfect enabler in Lee, whose bull-headed push through life masks a deep-seated pain at being more or less abandoned, but nevertheless pushes the pair through their peaks and valleys.

It's how willing writer/director Garth Jennings is to pull us through those that ultimately makes *Rambow* so compelling. He recognizes that childhood is largely life without filters, and that applies as much to swinging through an English forest with a tie for a headband as it does to watching your friend drift away from you. Though splayed and unkempt, *Son of Rambow's* greatest strength is in a kind of emotional honesty, an eagerness to capture a feeling as much as a moment, and the result is a

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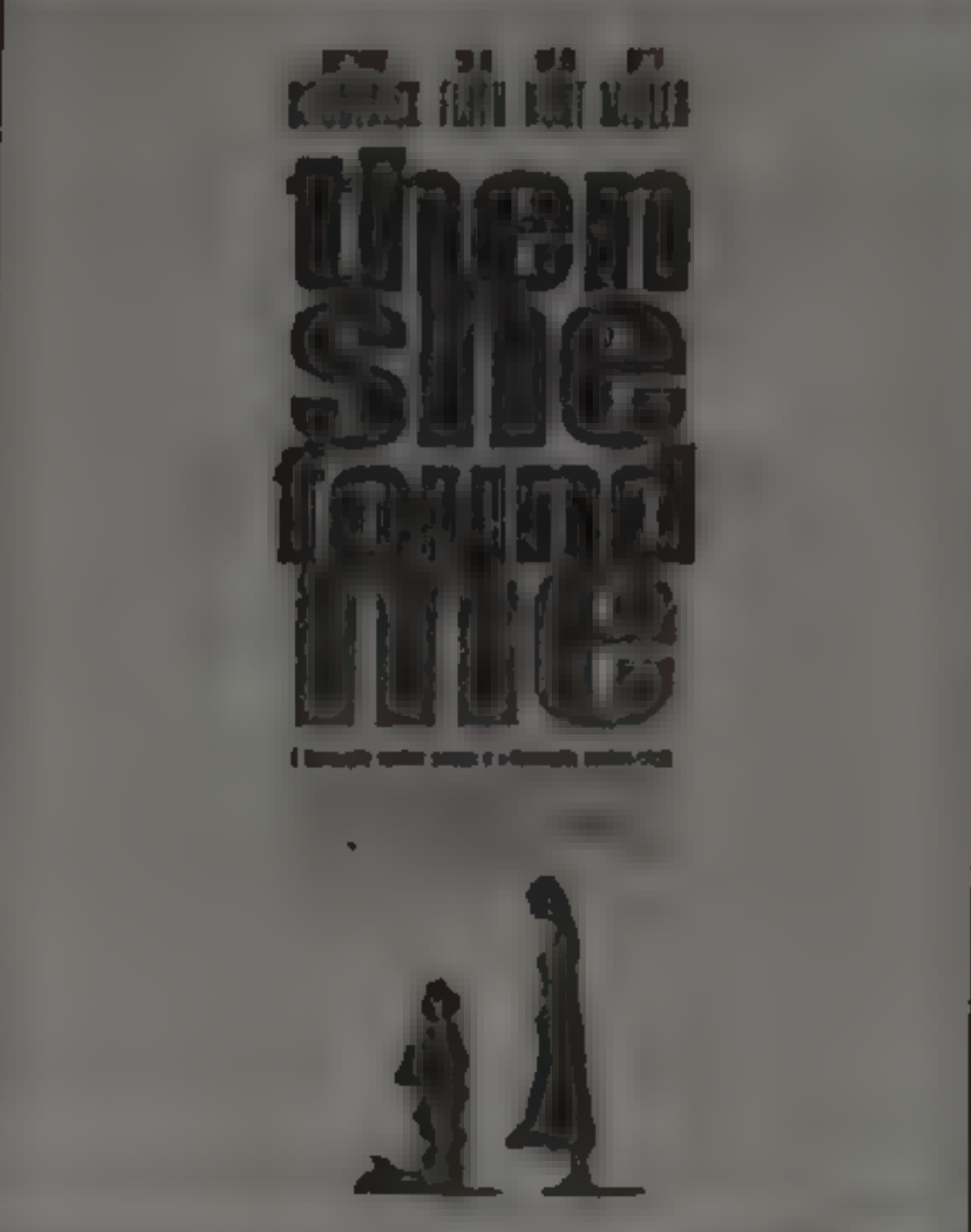
INDIANA JONES
THE ADVENTURE
KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
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SON OF RAMBO

FILM CAPSULES

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

film about childhood that's as touching and true as watching a home video of childhood's definitive moments.

INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
DIRECTED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG
WRITTEN BY DAVID KOPEL
STARRING HARRISON FORD, CATE BLANCHETT, KAREN ALLEN
★★

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuuweekly.com
The resurrection of a beloved character is

fraught with peril, and begs for answers to many a question: has the character aged well? Does the latest appearance add new layers to the character, or does it simply rehash past glories? When it's all over, is there a bad taste left behind? That's what the triumvirate of writer/producer George Lucas, director Steven Spielberg and star Harrison Ford are up against with *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, the fourth film in the saga of the globetrotting, evil-fighting archaeologist in the title. Well, those questions, and "Can Lucas hold his CGI-loving hands in check long enough to not introduce any soulless, digital characters into the film the way he did with good ol' Jar Jar Binks in the second Star Wars trilogy?"

There were two ways that this film could have gone: a return to the tone of the original Indy film, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, where there was a playful feel rooted in old adventure serials, but the cast still managed to play every moment, no matter how unbelievable the details, with a grounding seriousness; or, the filmmakers could simply pick up and continue down the comedic road that was the heart of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, the third in the series, where Indy and his father (Sean Connery), bickered back and forth for the length of the film.

The Crystal Skull starts off in a good way, set in 1957, nearly 20 years after the events of *The Last Crusade*, with an impressive opening using the famous fedora and a silhouette to re-introduce the character, immediately throwing him into action against a series of Cold War-era Russian villains. But then it quickly heads down a path that substitutes humour for genuine character, leaving Indy splitting his time on screen between running and fighting, cracking self-deprecating jokes—quipping that things aren't as easy as they used to be is not a com-

mentary on age; it's just a lazy joke—and delivering plenty of exposition that simply fills time before the next big sequence.

And that's one of the biggest problems so much of *The Crystal Skull* just seems like one set piece tacked onto another with very little glue holding them together. Now, that same approach of connecting the dots was a huge—no, gargantuan—part of the earlier films, but there was always the character of Indiana Jones, a man who is up against just about everybody and consistently takes his lumps and then some, that acted as the thread through each scene. Here, though, Indy practically disappears into the expository dialogue, becoming just another action hero existing for the express purpose of getting to the next big special effect—and they get pretty big by the end of this film, easily eclipsing the scale of the melting wax faces in the climax of *Raiders*, but coming nowhere near that in terms of emotional impact.

Even the reunion of Indy and his original girl, Marion Ravenwood (Karen Allen), fails to deliver anything more than the slightest of sparks. Long gone is the fiery woman that fans remember, replaced by an unrecognizable character who seems to play the role that Sean Connery would have had he agreed to return to the series as Indy's foil in a bickering odd couple. It's sad, actually—even a little pathetic—watching Indy and Marion argue like Nicholson and Diane Keaton, or any aging couple of actors slumming it in some bad Hollywood comedy.

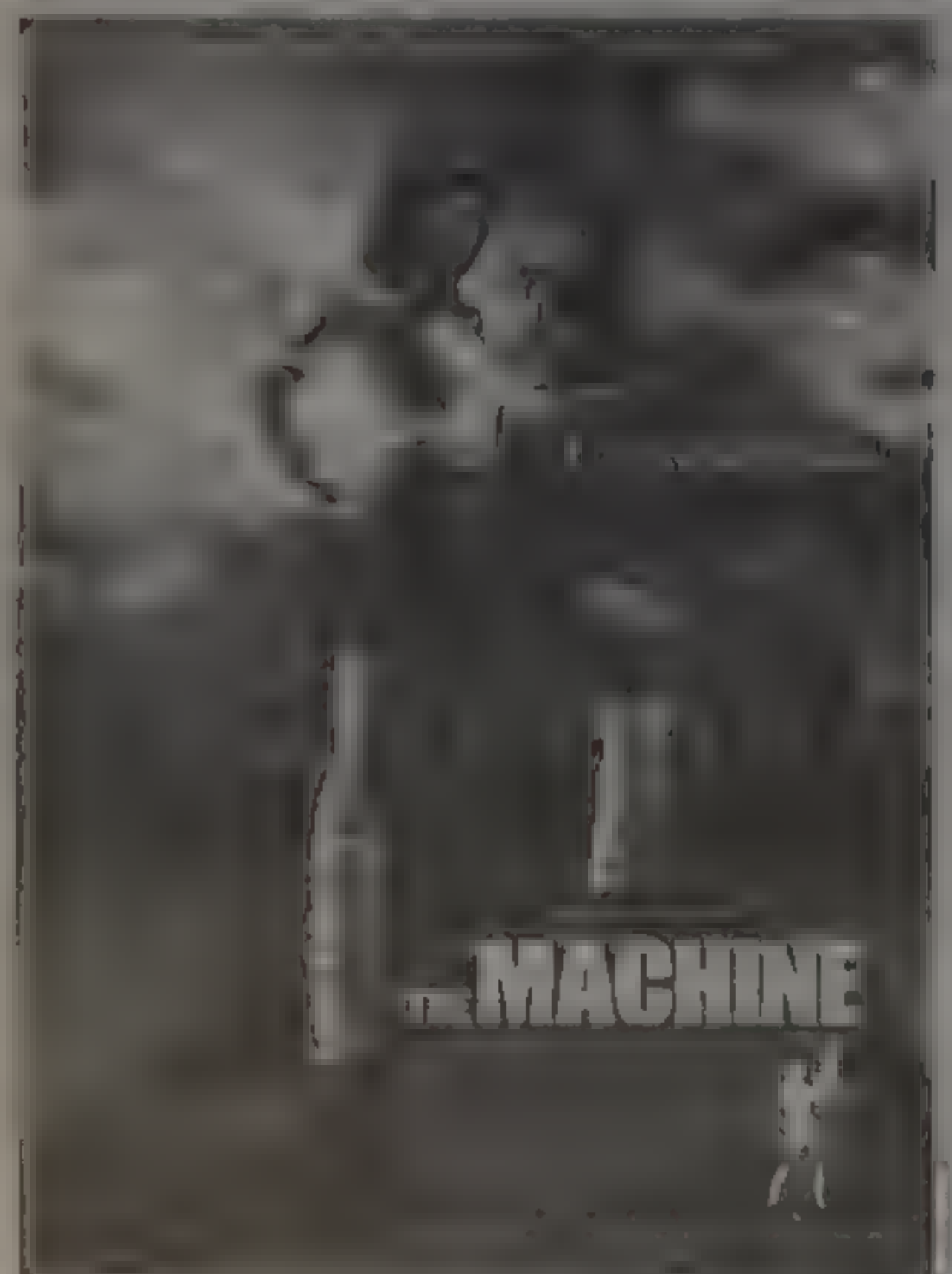
While there's nothing wrong with a lightweight, thrill-a-minute Indiana Jones adventure—that's pretty much what you sign up for when you head in to the films—there's just no excuse for taking 20 years to get around to a film that disappoints increasingly as the reels roll. In the end, it might not have been so bad if Lucas had intervened and added a CG

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THE MACHINE GIRL
{MASHINO GARU}

DIRECTED BY NIKOLAI KOSLOV
FRIDAY TO MONDAY AT 9:00 PM

HARRISON FORD SUNDAY
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Ayla Brook recharges *After the Morning After*

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuweekly.com

"Jeez, the hard questions right off the top, hey?" laughs Saskatchewan-born, Edmonton-based songwriter **Ayla Brook**

Well, it's never easy when you bring up former lovers, and former bands tend to be very much in the same boat—you just don't know why a group broke up unless you hear it from one of the members, and even then perspectives can vary wildly. This particular question is directed at Brook, the man whose songs steered AA Sound System through a couple of albums—2004's *Lily Plain* ... You're *Hardly Poor* and 2006's *Laissez Faire*—before the band faltered and faded as a result of drummer Marek Tyler moving to west to Victoria and guitarist Lane Arndt first contemplating a move to Toronto before altering his plans and opening a music school right here in Edmonton instead.

Brook says that the band is not officially over—"Lane and I have talked and it's not like another AA project is

PREVIEW

SAT, MAY 24 (9 PM)
AYLA BROOK
WITH THE SWIFTYS
PAWN SHOP, \$10

out of the question," he notes. "It's just a matter of everybody getting their times together"—but he also admits that it seemed that way for a time, and, being a musician and a songwriter, he had to find something else to keep himself busy with. The result of Brook's restless-

ness is a new solo album, *After the Morning After*. The sound on the new record is as much Brook as AA Sound System was—his rootsy style of songwriting has always been apparent, and his loose singing is still in the centre of the music—but gone are the electronic sounds that coloured much of the band's work. What is left over is a decidedly folky sound, with foot stomps and knee slaps replacing drums on the majority of the album.

(The one exception is the title track where a drum machine stands in for the real thing—and works remarkably well.)

The songs on the new album were culled from Brook's catalogue of unused material—some of it old, a few written in the last couple of years—so the songwriter had a definite idea of what he wanted this record to sound like. To help him capture that sound Brook invited Danny Michalski and Johnny Blerot, the producer and engineer who worked on AA Sound System's last album, out-

Brook's farm in Saskatchewan where the trio and a few other friends did everything down in five and a half days of work. Brook admits that he'd like to take a little more time recording his next album, but he says the swift session was perfect for *the Morning After*.

"It really helped serve to make the kind of record I wanted to make."

CONTINUES ON PAGE 58





The Details comfortable in both city and country

Nothing could be more different than being a farmer and being in a band. Farming is tied to a place, a piece of land that you own and work over the course of a lifetime or even generations, but is restricted to the same look, the same view, a feeling of permanence. Being in a band, on the other hand, is about constant change. Styles change, artistic impulses shift and the band members themselves have to move from place to place in a cramped van on dusty roads bringing their songs to the people who want to hear them.

As he'll tell you—and as he has to explain to a lot of interviewers—the Details guitarist and vocalist Jon Plett knows that his two occupations as a farmer and a musician are an odd combination. But he loves both of them and is always willing to lend a hand on his parents' farm whenever he's home from a tour.

I thought I'd do a bit of work while I'm home—right now I'm seeding soy beans, actually. I'm mostly driving a tractor—that's essentially all I'm doing—and this tractor is equipped with GPS so it basically drives itself and I just sit here," he laughs as the wind makes explaining that the band comes by its country sensibilities honestly into his cell phone difficult. "Three of us grew up outside of large cities, Sean Vidal [guitar and vocals] and Keli [Martin, bass] both grew up in rural Saskatchewan, so I think we aren't really city kids at heart."

Even though they're not city kids, the band did have one of their songs recently featured in the very urban television drama *Lipstick Jungle*, which revolves around some highly successful, highly ambitious, friends in New York City. "A little bit ironic," Plett allows before talking about the experience of watching an American

PREVIEW THU, MAY 29 (7:30 PM)
THE DETAILS
WITH BLIND TIGER, TIGER, YES, NICE
TEDDY'S, \$10

network show while his band's song played. "We had never watched the show before and I don't know if it's even on anymore. I don't watch TV much anymore but I haven't heard much of it since. It was a new show and it was only the third or fourth episode that our song appeared in—all I knew about it was it was the new *Sex and the City*. We practiced that night so we got an extra case of beer and watched *Lipstick Jungle* and had a few laughs."

After all the success of the band's last album, *Draw a Distance. Draw a Border*, as well as the heavy touring, the band will settle down for a bit once the current Western Canadian jaunt is through, beginning the process of creating a new album. Some of it is already written, but much still needs to be done.

"We spent a lot of the winter writing and when we get back from this tour we're going to spend the rest of the summer working on new stuff as well. I think we'll start demoing as soon as we get back and look at recording this winter, which'll mean an '09 release," Plett explains, before considering the expanded options that bands face when releasing music today. "I think there's still a place for a CD—I think we all agree in our band that there needs to be some sort of a hard copy. I guess vinyl is the new thing—for the second time—so we'll probably explore that as well, but we're kind of old fashioned I guess you could say in that we feel like there needs to be something to hold onto." ▼

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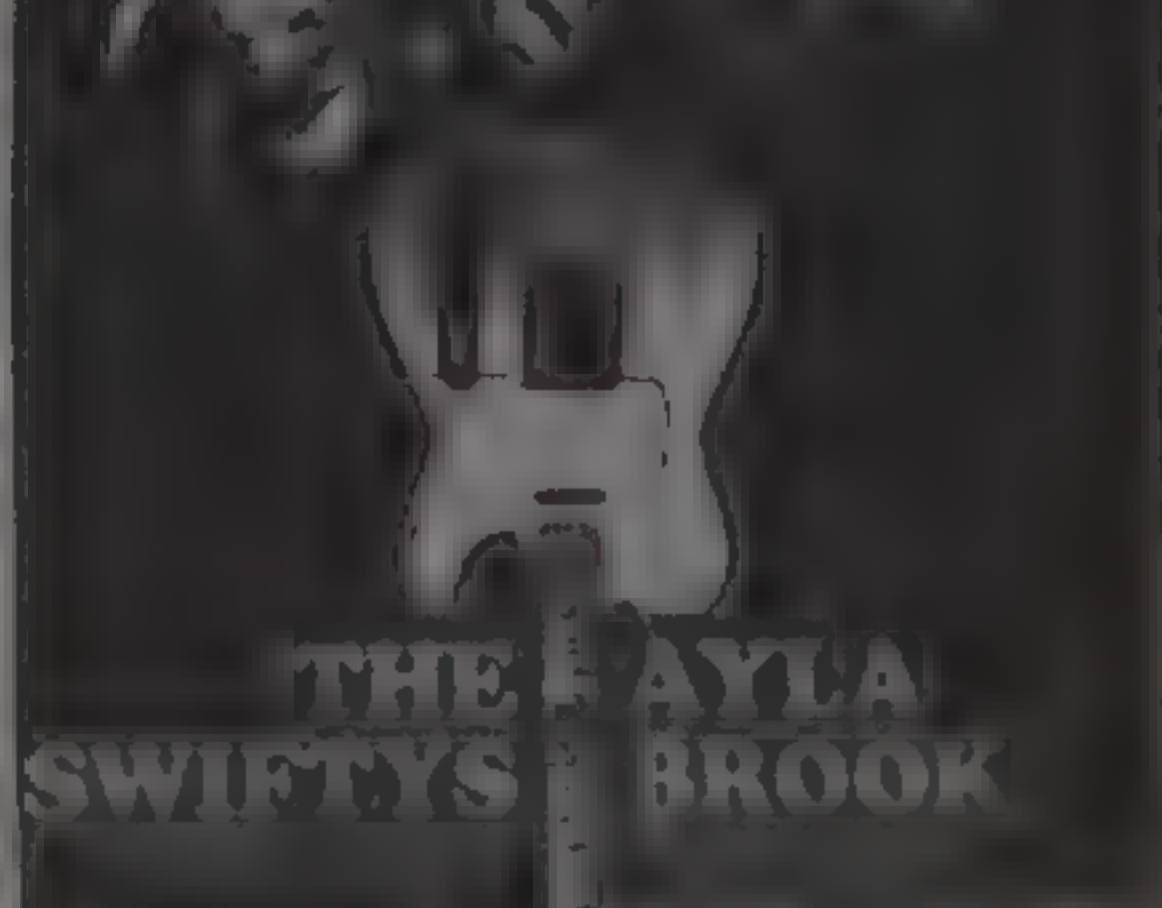
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A TROPHY LIFE
COWBOY & THE
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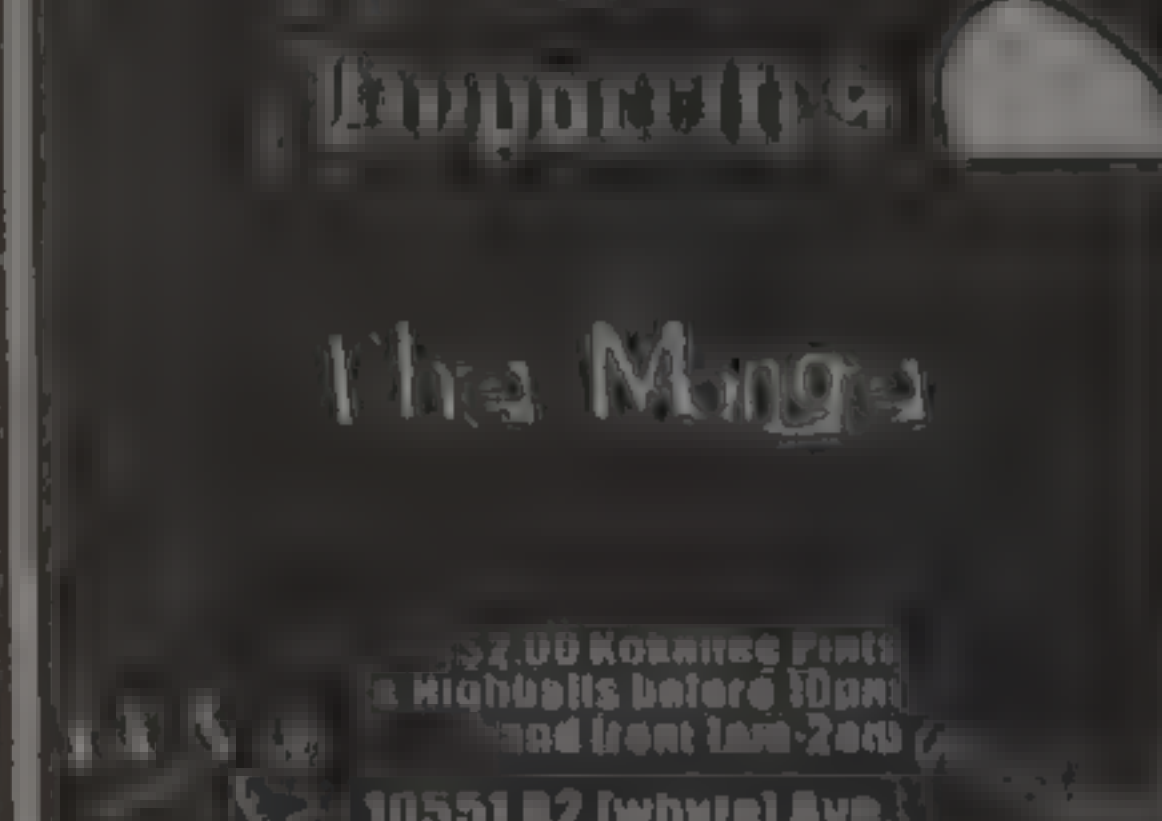
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SATURDAY MAY 24

THE SWIFTYS
AYLA BROOK



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BLUE CHAIR CAFE Tony McManus; \$20 (adv with dinner)/\$25 (door show only)

CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB stage hosted by Alberta Grudo; 6-10pm

DUSTER'S PUB Thursdays open stage; hosted by the Mary Thomas Band; 9pm

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE Mars Volta (art-rock/experimental); all ages event; 7pm; \$39.50 at TicketMaster

FOUR ROOMS Christina Schmolke; 8pm

JAMMERS PUB Thursdays open jam; 7-11pm

LB'S COUNTRY KITCHEN AND PUB Country Star Search Preliminary competition; 8-10pm

LYON CLUB Live Dueling Pianos; no cover; 8pm

MURDOCH AND ANN FRIEND Thursdays: breaks, electro house spun

STOLL'S ON WHYTE Beatpaty with Kristoff and Christian J; 9pm; no cover

VALVE UNDERGROUND Degree, DJ Genet; 9pm; no cover

WILLIAM'S PIANO BAR Lawrence (jazz piano); 8pm

YVON'S COUNTRY KITCHEN AND PUB Country Star Search Preliminary competition; 8-10pm

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LEVEL 2 LOUNGE Thursdays: Funky house/techno with DJ Coin Hargreaves; house/breaks with DJ Krazy K; hardstyle/techno with DJ Decha; tech trance/electro with DJ Savage Gartet; no minors; no cover

NEW CITY I Love '80s Party with Blue Jay, Naz Naz, no minors; 8-10pm; no cover

NEW CITY Bingo hosted by Dexter Nebula and Anarchy Adam; no minors; 10pm; no cover

ON THE ROCKS Smart Alex; 9pm

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JET NIGHTCLUB The Paul Stanleys

JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Graham Lawrence (jazz piano); 8pm

MURRIETA'S Terry Jordan (piano); 8-10pm

O'BRYEN'S Chris Wynters

O'MALLEY'S RUSH PUB Dwayne Canan Duo (blues '50s/'60s; roots originals); 8-10pm; 12-30am

ON THE ROCKS Smart Alex; 9pm

PAWN SHOP Losing Dark, A Trophy Life, Cowboy and the Prize Fighter, Sink This City

PAWN SHOP Losing Dark, A Trophy Life, Cowboy and the Prize Fighter, Sink This City

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BANK ULTRA LOUNGE Connected Fridays: 917 The Bounce, Nestor Delano, Luke Morrison

BAR-B-BAR DJ James; no cover

BAR WILD Bar Wild Fridays

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Friday: DJs spin on the main floor, the Woodtop; DJ Ben Jammin'

BOOTS Retro Disco; retro/dance

BUDDY'S We made 'em famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup; no cover before 10pm

DELUXE FURNACE DJ Eddy Toonflash; '70s progressive rock, disco, and electronic indie with Joel Rebo

EMERALDA'S Ezzies Freakin' Friday: Playing the best in country

ESMERALDA'S Ezzies Freakin' Friday: Playing the best in country

GAS PUMP Top 40/dance with DJ Christian

HALO Mod Club: indie rock, new wave, Brit pop, and '60s soul with DJ Blue Jay, DJ Travy D; no cover before 10pm; \$5 (after 10pm)

LEVEL 2 LOUNGE Hypnotic Friday: Breakbeat, house, progressive and electro with Groovy Cuvy, DJ Fuuze

NEW CITY Supremes: Bitch! Fridays: electro, indie, alternative, techno with DJs Danish, Squirrely B, guests; no minors; 9pm (door)

NEW CITY Friday Night Freak Out: rock and roll/punk/rock/anything/anything with DJs Jebus and Anarchy Adam (from CJSR's Your Weekly AA Meeting); G-Whiz

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THE FAT DAVE SOUND WAVE

BY ALYSSA MOEL

ALYSSA MOEL / alyssa@vancouverweekly.com

When "Fat" Dave Johnston started playing music it was supposed to be a ticket out of town. But a few years and a young family later it's his perception, not location, that's changed.

"You can get so fixated on the [negative]," the Edmonton singer/guitarist says. "I've had that mentality about trying to get out here and find better, but it's not about you make of it."

Johnston adds, "I would still love to live in Montreal. It's kind of a beautiful place to be off and end all of your problems."

While the fans of his music will tell you Johnston's sound has changed since his former band, the Fat Dave Sound, focused primarily on honing a sound with loud and energetic songs. Now, with a little more effort, Johnston is playing at the quieter side of the sound. As the Fat Dave Sound, Johnston's band is set up

"I want to put myself in a position where I can play to any room, any demographic of people," he says. "As an entertainer it's your job to meet people half way. As far as picking up an acoustic guitar and having people appreciate it, I want to be able to do that. I have back up musicians lined up for [the upcoming] show and other shows down the road and it's still fun time party music."

Johnston's transition to solo artist was made easier by his day job at Long & McQuade, where finding back up musicians is as easy as choosing a drum kit—only cheaper. His manager at the store was one of the first to jump on board.

"[My manager] was out back having a smoke and he said, 'Well, I've been thinking about it and I think I need to play bass in your solo band,'" Johnston recalls.

Similar deals with others have also been struck. The only problem: "[There's] nobody left to run the shop on the weekend. [It's] kind of a catch-22."

But soon Johnston won't be venturing far from home for weekend touring anyways. In two months he will become a father. The exciting addition won't be a detriment to his music, considering he

likens rehearsals to "shooting pool or drinking beer in the garage," for the musically-minded.

"If making music was my job it would be a stressful job," he says. "Whereas I can command this kind of lifestyle on my own terms because I have a regular income and I have things in place ... I can take music as seriously or as lightly as I want based on whatever is going on."

His next handful of shows will keep him close to home and feature a different kind of performance than fans might be used to.

"The last show we played we didn't say anything to the crowd until the end," he recalls. "Song led into song led into song. Like any DJ will tell you if you stop in between and give people a chance to sit down it's hard to get them back up and dancing ... [Now] there's some stories to be told about some of the songs. One thing that might be fun to do is explain where the songs are coming from ... That matters to some people too."

Johnston's foray into music might not have wound up exactly as he intended, but he proves that it's never really about the destination anyway. **v**

WHERE THEY ARE

VENUE GUIDE

WEM Phase III, 489-SHOW • EMPIRE BALLROOM WEM Phase 2, upper level, WEM, 488-9494 • EXPRESSIONZ CAFE 20125-107 Ave, 471-9125 • FIDLER'S ROOST 8906-99 St • FILTHY MCNASTY'S 10511-82 Ave, 916-1557 • FLUID LOUNGE 10105-109 St, 780-429-0700 • FOUR ROOMS Edmonton Centre, 102 Ave, 426-4767 • FOX 10125-109 St, 990-0680 • FRESH START CAFE Riverbend Sq, 433-9623 • FUNKY BUDDHA (Whyte Ave) 10341-82 Ave, 433-9676 • GAS PUMP 10166-114 St, 488-4841 • GINGUR SKY 15505-118 Ave, 913-4312/953-3606 • HALO 10538 Jasper Ave, 423-HALO • HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB 15120 A (basement), Stony Plain Rd, 780-756-6010 • HILLTOP PUB 8220-106 Ave • HOOLIGANZ PUB 10704-124 St, 452-1168 • HULBERT'S 7601-115 St, 438-1161 • THE IVORY CLUB 2940 Calgary Trail South • JAMMERS PUB 11948-127 Ave, 451-8779 • J AND R BAR AND GRILL 4003-106 St, 436-4403 • JEFFREY'S CAFE 9640 142 St, 451-8890 • JEKYLL AND HYDE 10610-100 Ave • JUBILEE AUDITORIUM 11455-87 Ave, 427-2760 • JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Chateau Louis Hotel, 11727 Kingsway Ave, 732-4583 • KAS BAR 10444-82 Ave, 433-6768 • LB'S COUNTRY PUB 23 Akins Dr, St. Albert • LEGENDS PUB 6104-172 St, 481-2788 • LEVA CAPPUCCINO BAR 11053-88 Ave, 433-5382 • LEVEL 2 LOUNGE 11607 Jasper Ave, 2nd Fl, 447-4495 • MYER HOROWITZ THEATRE U of A Campus • NAKED CYBER CAFE 10354 Jasper Ave • NEWCASTLE PUB 6108-90 Ave, 490-1999 • NEW CITY 10081 Jasper Ave, 413-4578 • NIKKI DIAMOND'S 8130 Gateway Blvd • O'BYRNE'S 10616-82 Ave, 414-6766 • O'MAILLE'S IRISH PUB 104, 398 St. Albert Rd, St. Albert, 458-5700 • ON THE ROCKS 11730 Jasper Ave, 482-4767 • OVERDRIVE NEIGHBORHOOD PUB 6104-104 St, 439-9485 • OVERTIME DOWNTOWN 10304-111 St, 423-1643 • OVERTIME SOUTH Whitemud Crossing, 4211-106 St, 485-1717 • PAWN SHOP 10551-82 Ave, Upstairs, 432-0814 • PLANET INDIGO-JASPER AVENUE 11607 Jasper Ave • PLANET INDIGO-ST. ALBERT 812 Liberton Dr, St. Albert • PLEASANTVIEW COMMUNITY HALL 10860-57 Ave, 474-5270 • RAINMAKER ER RODEO St. Albert, www.rainmaker.ab.ca • RED STAR 10538 Jasper Ave, 428-0825 • ROBERTSON WESLEY UNITED CHURCH 10209-123 St • ROCK PUB AND GRILL 570 St. Albert Tr, St. Albert, 458-5571 • ROSEBOWL/ROUGE LOUNGE 10111-117 St, 452-5253 • ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM 12845-102 Ave • ST. TIMOTHY'S ANGLICAN CHURCH 8420-145 St • SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE 10416-82 Ave, 437-0231/710-1626 • SAVOY 10401-62 Ave, 438-0373 • SIDELINERS PUB 11018-127 St, 453-6006 • STARLITE ROOM 10030-102 St, 428-1099 • STEEPS TEA LOUNGE-COLLEGE PLAZA 11116 St, 988-8105 • STEEPS-OLD GLENORA 12411 Stony Plain Rd • STOLLY'S 2nd Fl, 10388-82 Ave, 437-2293 • STONEHOUSE PUB 11012 Jasper Ave, 420-0448 • STRATHERN PUB 9514-87 St, 465-5478 • TAPHOUSE 9020 McKenny Ave, St. Albert, 458-0860 • THREE BANANAS CAFE 9918-102 Ave, 428-2200 • TOUCH OF CLASS Chateau Louis Hotel, 11727 Kingsway, 452-7770 • TRANSALTA ARTS BARN 10330-84 Ave • URBAN FRAT 10220-103 St, 906-7939 • URBAN LOUNGE 10544-82 Ave, 437-7699 • VELVET UNDERGROUND 10030-102 St (downstairs), 428-1099 • WHISTLESTOP 12418-132 Ave, 451-5506 • WILD WEST SALOON 12912-50 St, 476-3388 • WUNDERBAR 8120-101 St, 436-2286 • X-WRECKS 9303-50 St • Y AFTER-HOURS 10028-102 St, 994-3256, www.yafterhours.com • YARDBIRD SUITE 10203-88 Ave, 432-0428 • YESTERDAYS PUB 112, 205 Carnegie Dr, St. Albert

Urban
lounge
www.urbanlounge.net

THURSDAY
MAY 22

DANNI
COEY

FRIDAY
MAY 23

CRUSH

WEDNESDAY
MAY 28

CHASING JONES
WITH FIRST CITY FALLEN & CARNEA

THURSDAY
MAY 29

TWENTYONESEVEN

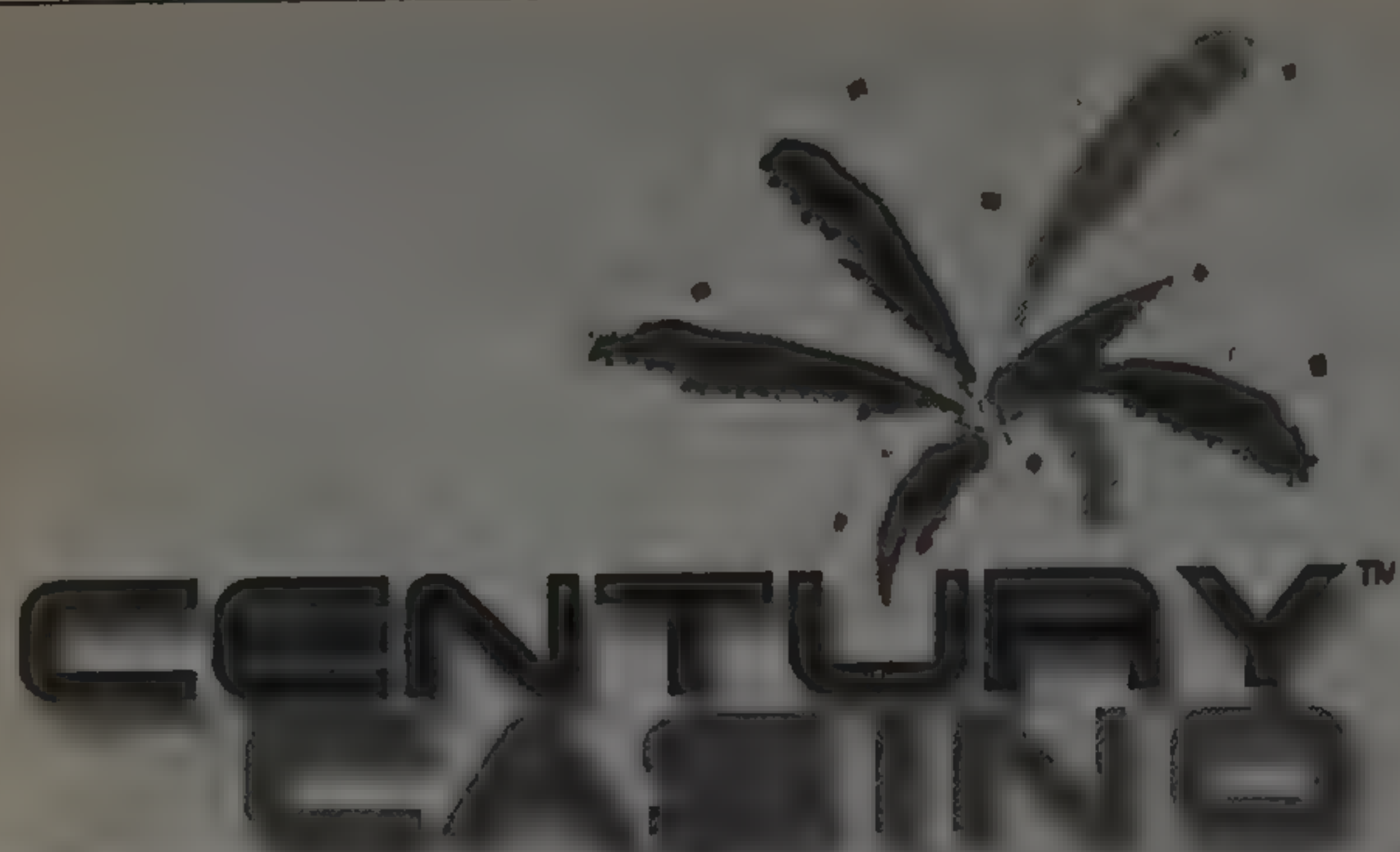
FRIDAY
NIGHTS!

\$ 2.25 HIGHBALLS
UNTIL 11:00 PM

\$ 2.25 JAGER SHOTS
UNTIL 11:00 PM

BOOK YOUR
BIRTHDAY
PARTIES!

10544-82 AVE. PH:437-7699



CHECK OUT THESE UPCOMING SHOWS!

MAY 24

TIX \$12.55 ADV.
GENERAL ADMISSION TICKETS
AVAILABLE AT CENTURY CASINO

**CLASSIC CAR
WEEKEND**

**THE PETER
TURLAND TRIO**

JUN 6

TIX \$34.55 ADV.
AVAILABLE AT TICKETMASTER
437-8000 AND CENTURY CASINO

**KENNY SHIELDS
STREETHEART**
RESERVED SEATING

JUN 27

TIX \$34.55 ADV.
TICKETS ON SALE 9PM
RESERVED SEATING

**Matti
Drusk**

JUN 28

TIX \$34.55 ADV.
TICKETS ON SALE 9PM
RESERVED SEATING

**DAVID
WILCOX**

JUL 4

TIX \$44.55 ADV.
AVAILABLE AT TICKETMASTER
437-8000 & CENTURY CASINO
RESERVED SEATING

BLUE OYSTER CULT

JUL 11

TIX \$34.55 ADV.
TICKETS ON SALE 9PM
RESERVED SEATING

**THE
STAYHILLERS**

ALMOST ABBA • THE ZOMBIES

England's new, new rave means less is more

MUSIC | BACKLASH BLUES

ROLAND MEMBERSHIP
roland@vancouverweekly.com

In my travels across England, I've found that trends happen there before they do out in Canada's West, but they disappear just as quickly. When I was abroad last fall, new rave fashion was still en vogue and I was seeing increasingly garish colour combinations pile on top of themselves in a nauseous amalgam on all the young dudes. Fast forward to Edmonton circa now and you see kids that go to Vic on Whyte Ave with neon pink leopard print jean jackets on. The word from London? It's all about muted colours, girls with black fishnets, minimalism. Fortunately, the kids are still raving like neon is in their blood. This was quite apparent at Fabric in London this past weekend.

Fabric is a legendary superclub, the

next hall down the line from Manchester's Hacienda and the Paradise Garage in New York City. Made famous by its pioneering FabricLive CD series, the club is separated into three rooms and can maybe hold a couple thousand people. The dance floor holds bass units that pulse the low end into your feet for a pretty cool sensory response. The club's design is obviously inspired by German engineering, with dark greys saturating the walls and an almost prison-like atmosphere. The back room is centred by a rusty metal table in the shape of the Fabric logo: a square with a line extending up from each corner.

MINIMALISM WAS ALIVE in the music as well. One of the acts in Room 2 was the Touch, an electro group composed of several Swedish youths. Armed with laptops, these dudes triggered current techno records as well as edits of '80s hits (Wham! was used at one point). This was compounded by sparse live

guitar accompaniment as well as vocals from a Swedish babe named Lina who also humped the ground. It was a pretty creative setup, but it wasn't too fancy, eschewing the luminescence of years past.

This is a welcome change to the recent British tendency toward the maximal idea: huge synths, bright colours, drug culture. The only people still trading in this concept are the younger indie bands, such as Late of the Pier and Hadouken! New rave is now played out, a victim of oversaturation and media's tendency towards the co-opt. Musical scenery changes are always responses to existing cultures and the change from maximal sounds to minimal ones is a healthy alternative. Even when immersed in the modern rave at Fabric, I didn't find the music to be unnecessarily bombastic or concerned with drastic shifts. It was all about ebb and flow and continuity, DJing concerned with a dark vibe that suited the environment. **V**

8pm, no cover

YATTA! HAWAIIAN KIDS (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Matrona Isanna J Donovan
(Bedroom); Degree Kristoff
(Underground); DJ TZ (Upper Heaven)

YATTA! SUPER (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
9pm, 8pm (door), 9pm (show), \$20
(member)/\$24 (guest) at TicketMaster

CLASSICAL

CONCERT BANDS (Festival City Winds
Music Society; Evan Sampson (saxophone);
7:30pm; \$7 (door)

WINDSPEAR CENTRE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Beethoven, Mozart and Kuerti, Anton
Kuerti (piano); Edmonton Symphony
Orchestra; David Atherton, (conductor);
7:30pm

DJS

BACKROOM VODKA BAR (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Saturdays: Top 40 with DJ
Kila Kila

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
evenings on the Main Floor
Art Rock/Electro/Trash, The Menace
Sessions with Miss Mannered

BUDDY'S Under night for men only
free pool and tourney, DJ
Kila Kila

BLUE BURGER TRIP (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
and 70s progressive rock, disco, and
electronic indie with Joel Rebek
house, mashup

FRANKIE DAVE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Sat a different theme

GLAD LOUNGE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Gold Mash-Up with Haman B and
M. Kila

FUNKY BARBORA PARTY (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Top tracks, rock, retro with DJ Damian

GRAND SKY (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Blind Boys Of Alabama, 8pm

HELL (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
every Sat with DJ Junior Brown, Luke
Morrison, Nestor Delano, An Rhodes

LEVEL 2 LOUNGE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
DJ Groovy Duvy and guests

NEW CITY LIQUID LOUNGE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Saturdays real alternative, classics,
punk with DJ Nazz Nomed; no cover

NEW CITY SUBURBS (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Sucks: electro, industrial, alt and indie
electro, rock with DJs Greg Gory and
Blue Jay, \$5

POCKET INDIGO-CASPER (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Avenue Suggestive Saturdays
breaks electro house with PI residents

RED STAR Saturdays indie rock, hip
hop, and electro with DJ Hol Philly
just guests

RENOZYBUS (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Sportsworld inline and roller
skating disco: Top 40 request with a
mix of retro and disco, 1-5pm and
7pm-12 midnight

STOLLS ON WHYTE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
house with People's DJ

TEMPLE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
with Degree and About DJs with
wealthy guests, 9pm

WOLFGANG (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Industry Night: Requests with DJ Bo

8pm

YATTA! HAWAIIAN KIDS (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)

**SUN
LIVE MUSIC**

ANTHONY (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)

BLUE CHAIR CAFE Rosette Guitars;
donations

CROWN AND ANCHOR PUB (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Sunday jam; 7pm

DUSTY'S PUB (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
hosted by the Mary Thomas Band

HULBERT'S PUB Songwriters
Stage; 7pm, no cover

LAURENCE PUB (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
jam, 4-8pm

NEWCASTLE PUB (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
hosted by Willy and Dave, 2-3pm

NEWSBOYS, PILLAR (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)

O'BRYEN'S Sunday night open stage
with Joe Birt

ON THE BRICKS (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
DJ Phil Brooks

OSCAR'S PUB Open stage Sundays
hosted by Chris Wynters of Captain
Tractor 8-11pm

OVERDRIVE Anything Goes: acoustic
jam every Sunday afternoon with the
Shuffleboard; 1-3-5pm

ROCK RUMBLE LOUNGE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Avery and the Boomchangers, 9-30pm,
\$10

STALWARTS PUB (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Connection Launch Party: 3 girl bands
with DJ sets

WINDSPEAR CENTRE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Blind Boys Of Alabama, 8pm

CLASSICAL

ROYAL ORCHESTRA (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Petro Polylin (classical guitar); 5pm

ST. THOMAS' ANGLICAN CHURCH (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Music for Springtime: An
Evening to Remember: Sylvia Shadick-
Taylor and William Dimmer (piano and
trumpet); 7pm, \$15/free (child 6 and
under) at TIX on the Square

DJS

BACKSTAGE TAPAS (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Industry Night; with Atomic Improv,
Jameka and DJ Tim

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Afternoons: Phil 2-7pm, Main Floor
Got To Give It Up: Funk, Soul
Motown, Disco with DJ Red Dawn
Summit

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
greatest in House, Progressive and
Trip-Hop, Rudy Electro, 10pm-2:30am
guest DJs inquire at
Buddy's Nightclub

SINGIN' (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Industry Night: Requests with DJ Bo

URBAN FRAT Urban Ladies Night
Sundays
WUNDERBAR Sundays DJ Gallateo
and XS, guests; no cover

**MON
LIVE MUSIC**

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Mondays: live music monthly; no
cover

BURTON EVENT CENTRE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Kilswitch Engage, Throwdown,
Poison the Well, The End, all ages
event, 7pm (door); \$30 at
Universe.com, Ticketmaster.ca,
451-8000, Megatunes, Blackbird, FS
(V.I.P.)

IVORY CLUB Open mic Mondays
music and comedy, 8pm

PLEASANTVIEW COMMUNITY HALL (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Acoustic instrumental old time
fiddle jam hosted by the Wild Rose
Old Time Fiddlers Society; 7pm

ROSE BOWL LOUNGE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Legendary Rose Bowl Monday Jam
hosted by Sherry-Lee Wisor/Mika
McDonald (alternating); 9pm-12am

DJS

BAR VOLD (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Service Industry Night; no minors,
9pm-2am

BURTON NIGHTCLUB (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
latest and greatest in House,
Progressive and Trip-Hop; 12am-
2:30am; interested guest DJs inquire
at kelly@michetti.com, karaoke with
Tuzzy, amateur strip contest; 9pm-
1:30am

BLITZ MONASTERY (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Mondays with DJ SWAG

FLUID LOUNGE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)

NEW CITY LIQUID LOUNGE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Munch on Metal Mondays: '80s metal
with DJ Sammi Kerr; no minors; no
cover

ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM CAFE (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)
Live from the Museum, every Wed
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YATTA! HAWAIIAN KIDS (Kila Kila) (Kila Kila)

h was definitely a very live off the sort of rough and ready kind of record," he says. "It's the isolation. Nobody has any distractions. Nobody's internet. Your cell phones maybe don't work—the reception was better when we did the last record. "And for me, it's a good excuse for not to go home," he continues. "I don't want to get back to that space very often. And I'm comfortable there, I feel strong there. The songs sort of resonate a lot to me there. The subject matter is partially that, but it's a comfortable safe place and I don't have to worry about anything else while I'm there other than what's going on in my belly after I've finished eating the take, you know?"

A LARGE PART OF what Brook felt while recording in the house—in one room, really, with everyone making eye contact while playing—is a result of growing up there and, having left the farm for the concrete pastures of the big city, being able to go back there and return to his roots, if even for only a few days.

It's pretty heavy for me recording in that room," Brook admits. "It's where I grew up, it's where I went through all this music, it's the room my mother died in, so there's some heavy voodoo in that room. There's something going on in that space.

"And it sounds good, just acoustically—the way the angles of the roof are at right places, and it's a wood room—resonates," he adds. "When you fill it up, it sort of starts to sing, sort of in the same way a church does. It's got that sort of high ceiling in it. It does keep drawing me back to make more music in there. The next thing I do will probably be hiding out and writing, though, rather than recording."

Something that marks Brook's album is a distinct lack of fear when it comes to capturing more than just the notes of the notes being played. There's a life to the album that only happens when the atmosphere is just

as important to the sound as the songs are.

"Danny asked me, 'Well, are you concerned about creaking floorboards and clinks and this and that,' and I'm like, 'No, it's me in a room recording some songs, so let's not try to pretend that it's anything else,'" he recalls. "It makes it immediate when you listen to it.

"One extreme of the approach is you take out all the little finger slides on the fretboard between each

chord," he continues, reflecting. "Or you don't worry about it and you go, 'Well, that's the sound in the room.' A lot of my favourite records are that way, you can hear the creaks, you're drawn in more because you hear those extra things and you realize, 'Oh yeah, this actually happened. This isn't some guy programming this thing and that thing, and OK, then she went and did the vocal.' It makes it more of a documentation of an event. It's more of a snapshot—hopefully

well framed and in-focus—but a snapshot nonetheless."

HAVING CLEARED HIS slate of old songs with *After the Morning After*, Brook is now looking ahead to plenty of touring—he says he'll be on the road more than previously now that he can pick up and head out on his own without having to coordinate with other band members—and even some new material, though he says it's been somewhat slow going in the

songwriting department recently

"It's been hard lately—I feel like I'm working four jobs and I'm trying to get this thing out, although now that everything has sort of moved away, there are a couple, three or four things that are starting to bubble away and I know what direction I want for the next record," he says. "It's going to be a party record. It's time, I did the introspective quiet record ... It'll be the aging young hipster's last hurrah or something." ▽

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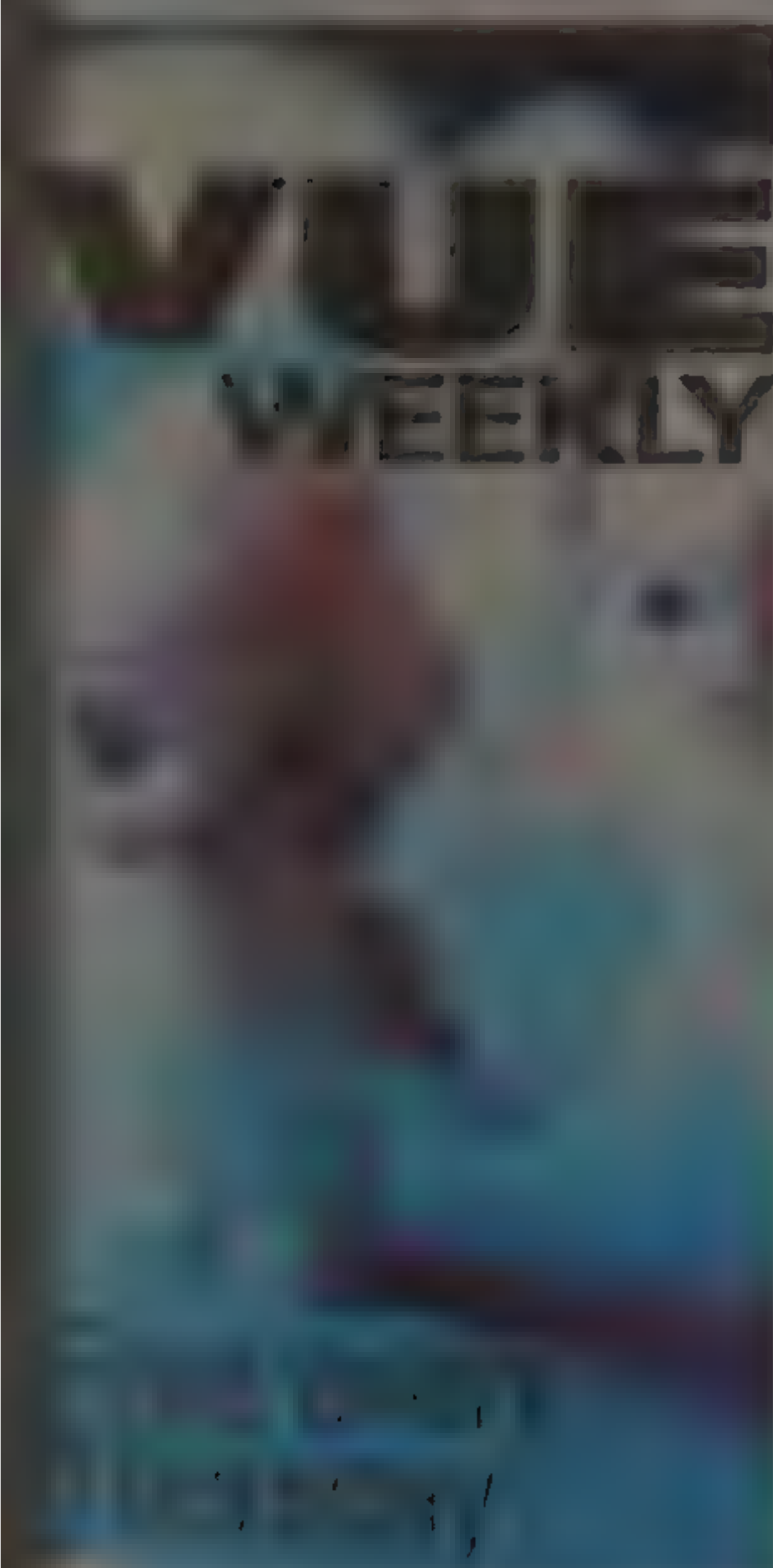
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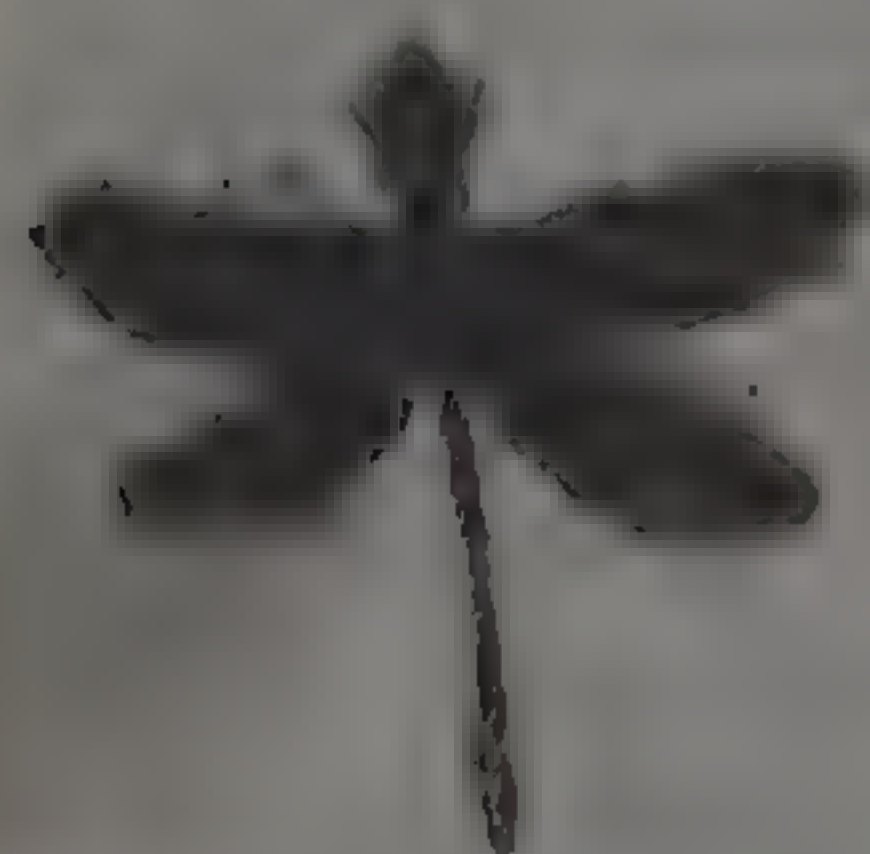
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JUNE 7
STARLITE ROOM

TWO SHOWS!
ALL AGES - DOORS 5 PM
NO MINORS - DOORS 9 PM
TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD, LISTEN

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VUE
VENUE



SEA WOLF

JUNE 10
VELVET UNDERGROUND

VUE
VENUE

LOCAL H

JUNE 11 - STARLITE ROOM
DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQ. - TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & LISTEN

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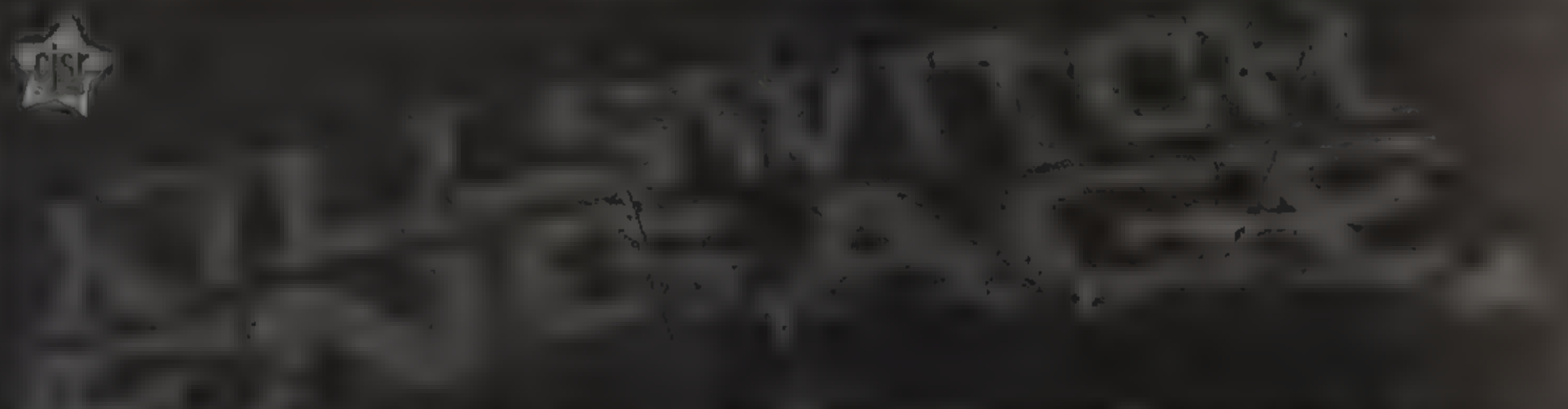
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MAY 24 - STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQ. - TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD AND FS (WEM)

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MAY 26 - EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

DOORS 7 PM - ALL AGES - TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & FS (WEM)

BATTLES

MAY 28
STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM / 18+ ID / TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & LISTEN

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VENUE

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Music and fashion collide on the runway

By [Name] / [Publication]

Experimental music lovers and fashionistas alike are in for a treat, because the musicians of the Boreal Electroacoustic Music Society (BEAMS) have teamed up with local fashion designers to create a night of fashion and live music.

The show's curator, Philip Jagger, plans the inspiration for the "Form vs Function" show germinated from a desire to smash down the walls between various art forms.

"I want to break down the barriers of the city," he emphasizes. "BEAMS doesn't really have the fashion people come into our element. So I want to bring the fashion people into the BEAMS element. And BEAMS into the fashion element, because you don't really see any of the fashion designers using experimental or avant-garde music in what they do in their set."

Fashion houses making an appearance include Morse Code, Sweet Carusel and GlamBam Clothing. One of the designers, Jagger explains, has paired up with a musician from BEAMS, and the designer and musician collaborated to make the two art forms into one.

So, the musician will go 'Oh! I want to have the models do this idea!' I want the models to do that!' And Elise [Truong of Sweet Carusel] has the models to do this or that. So they're working together.

Some musicians are composing for the designers as well," he is, noting that it can go the other way, too. "Like, I'm going to be composing stuff as well."

PREVIEW

SAT, MAY 24 (7 PM)
BEAMS
WITH COCKATOO
NAKED, \$10, \$5 (BEAMS MEMBERS)

ACTUALLY, JAGGER

no music written down on paper, and will be improvising the music he creates for his fashion designer on the spot. He says he'll draw inspiration from whatever the models are doing at the time.

David Wilmore, like the name is clear as to where the "Form vs Function" line of the show comes from. As Jagger points out, something that both music and fashion share is that they constantly explore the relationship between these two characteristics.

"For example, Elise does [it] and adapts and changes cloth and the human body to fit into fashion," he says. "You could also [draw] the same parallel between Don Ross or Bill Damur who fit or shape or reform classical music or new music into their parameters as well."

"Sometimes there's neither [form nor function]," he points out. "Sometimes the function of a piece of music is to have nothing in the music—is to have silence—like John [Cage's song '4'33''] or whatever. Or sometimes the purpose of a garment is to strip away the garment, to be so mundane and so everyday that it doesn't stand out."

"There's a lot of juxtapositions in life," he remarks. "But it's interesting to break down the little boxes of the artist community sometime created within Edmonton. And it's good to bring together more diverse artists to experiment and play with each other." ♥

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SATURDAY JUNE 7
#VELVET UNDERGROUND
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Wednesday May 28

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Who you gonna call? Charlie Sizemore!

GEN HANDLEY / gen@vuwweekly.com

You can refer to Charlie Sizemore as a bluegrass singer, a guitarist and a lawyer, but not as a songwriter.

"It just feels really unnatural for me," he says from his home in Goodlettsville, Tennessee, a town that

PREVIEW

TUE, MAY 27 (8 PM)

THE CHARLIE SIZEMORE BAND

ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM, \$18 (ADVANCE), \$20 (DOOR), FREE (KIDS UNDER 12 WITH AN ADULT)

lies just north of Nashville. "I'm a complete flop as a songwriter."

He tried songwriting when he first came to Nashville 17 years ago, but Sizemore says he was miserable because he was told what to write and how to write it. Ever since, he's let the songs grow inside him naturally and only when they're ready to



bloom does he write them down.

"I'll let a song germinate in my head for sometimes a year," he

explains slowly, in a classic, southern drawl. "I don't take notes and I don't carry around a pad to write on."

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By the time I get out a pen and a piece of paper, the song is finished.

The song just takes shape on its own. It continues. "I just try to guide it along and help it become what it already was."

But when he does sit down to write, whether it's with another person or by himself, Sizemore has a lot of rules that must be followed. The first is he doesn't go anywhere for the purpose of writing.

"The idea of going somewhere else to write," he pauses to chuckle, "Well, I just could never get used to that."

The second rule is Sizemore writes what he wants to write and the songs can't be forced out of him.

"When I first came to Nashville, I tried songwriting but what other people wanted was different from what I wanted," he says. "You know, there is such a thing as well-written trash."

SIZEMORE HAS BEEN playing music since he was six years old when he bought a fiddle that he had been sav-

ing up for since he was four. And even though he can live without songwriting, he says he can't live without going out on the road and playing live.

"I've never looked at my schedule and said, 'Gosh, I have too many dates to play,' or 'Shucks, I have to do an interview,'" he says. "I hate to use the word, but it's a passion."

The musician, who also runs a successful legal practice in Goodlettsville, says playing on the road is the only way to "clear his head." Ironically, he feels awkward in social situations but relishes the bond that forms between himself and the audience. He admits he's also uncomfortable talking about himself, but not once is there an awkward moment during the interview. In fact, he talks about himself openly and displays true southern hospitality right to the very end of the conversation.

"If you're ever in the middle of Tennessee and you're in a car wreck or get arrested, you know who to call, all right?" ♡



All in a day's work for the 40-some performers at Hip Hop in the Park

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vnuweekly.com

Local hip-hop fans are sure to know who Touch & Nato, Cadence Weapon and Politic Live are, but **Hip Hop in the Park**, which has over 40 Albertan hip-hop acts as part of its lineup, is about to showcase a slew of under-recognized and, perhaps, unknown local talent that this province has to offer.

With the picnic party being only eight hours long, most acts will be sharing the stage with another performer and allotted 15 minutes or less to showcase their music.

"I wanted to open it up so that everyone who is working on something that they consider to be a part of hip hop [will] be able to have a moment in the sun," explains event organizer Don Welsh. "Instead of selecting a select few to perform and telling everyone [else], 'Tough luck, better luck next year,' I wanted to give everyone a chance to get in the spotlight."

SPREADING THE WORD about local artists is one of the goals that Hip Hop in the Park hopes to achieve. When going to local shows, Welsh notes that he tends to see the same faces.

PREVIEW SAT, MAY 24 (12 PM)
HIP HOP IN THE PARK
WITH OVER 40 ALBERTA RAPPERS, DANCERS, DJs
AND UNUSUAL ARTISTS
LOUISE MAXIMALLY PARK, FREE
COMPLETE SCHEDULE AT HIPHOPINTHEPARK.CA

"I see a lot of big names in hip hop from outside of Edmonton [like Bool Camp Klik, Pete Rock or Afrika Bambaataa] and I see tons of people that I've never seen before," observes Welsh. "They're Edmonton hip-hop fans but they don't know what's going on in Edmonton hip hop. You don't really see them in any local hip-hop events. They just go out to the big ones. I think a lot of acts in Edmonton blow away a lot of these big name acts."

Besides eight hours worth of music, Hip Hop in the Park attendees can look forward to a barbecue, history lessons, games including "Name That Tune" and musical chairs, freestyle lessons and other activities related to hip hop culture.

"There's gonna be something for everyone," says Welsh. "If you don't like rap music, come down for the fact that there's gonna be a party going on in the park." ♡

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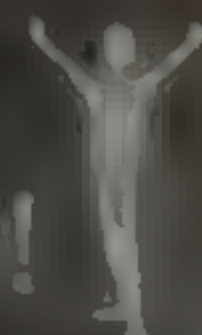
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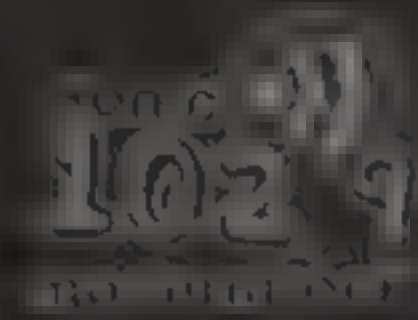
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**SATURDAY MAY 24
EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE**

GENERAL ADMISSION
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Kathleen Edwards

with special guest, Justin Rutledge

**MAY 29
THE STARLITE ROOM**

GENERAL ADMISSION - 18+ NO MINORS

JIMMY EAT WORLD

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
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The End is in sight

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vucweekly.com

Being in a band is like being in a serious relationship: you spend a lot of time together, you come to know what to expect and you pee with the door open.

When the End lost a guitarist and founding member Andrew Hercules last fall, it was kind of like losing a girlfriend or boyfriend. The guys had been together for nine years, after all.

"It's rough at first," admits singer Aaron Wolff, "but you just move forward."

There were a host of gig commitments, so the now four-piece from Mississauga bravely soldiered on, back on the road shortly after the announcement. Although, they were set to tour with Gwar, and one might expect that takes a special kind of courage anyway.

The End had already displayed its moxy, though, in releasing 2007's *Electric*, which took the band's grinding mathcore to more melodic heights and saw Wolff exploring his range beyond the screamo factor. The band caught a bit of heat for this, but the album also brought on comparisons to diverse bands like Dillinger Escape Plan and Tool.

"We had so many more things that we wanted to touch on with our music and not be afraid to take chances and try new things, not be afraid of attempting things because we know what people would think," Wolff explains. "So we just said fuck it and do it anyways."

"It sucks if you lose a fan, but if the fan can't listen to the record and see the evolution from the last record to this one—it sucks, but it happens," he adds. "We couldn't be more content with the songs and the material that we wrote, and it's far more advance and far deeper of a listen than we've ever been able to accomplish thus far."

Besides, as any band knows, you can't really win. Some fans will deride you for reproducing the same sound over and over, while others will dismiss you for sounding too different.

"Somebody's going to be pissed at some point," Wolff says. "If you're not pissing people off along the way, I guess you're not doing the right thing."

PREVIEW

MON, MAY 26 (7 PM)
THE END
WITH KILLSWITCH ENGAGE, THROWDOWN,
POISON THE WELL
EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE, \$30

WITH ITS HEAVY touring schedule over the last year, the band hasn't begun to work on its third full-length quite yet. The mental percolation has started, of course, but not a note has been laid down.

"We don't really write in segments," Wolff explains. "We sit down for an extended length of time and, like, really submerge ourselves in the music and the ideas that we're trying to create. We don't do things in segments because things get too scattered. Once we get home from this tour, we'll get into the rehearsal mode and the creation mode."

The End may or may not bring on another guitarist for its next album. The guys have talked about it, flirted with some prospects, but are keeping their options open. ▽

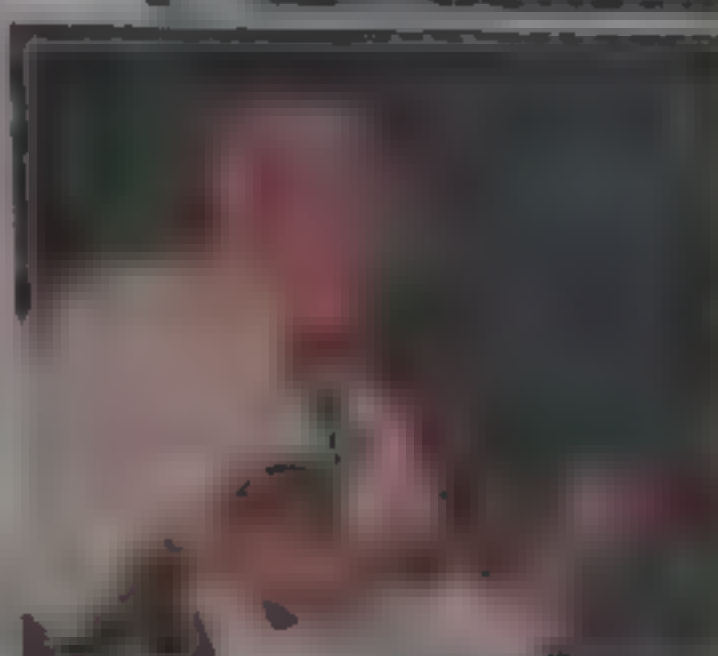
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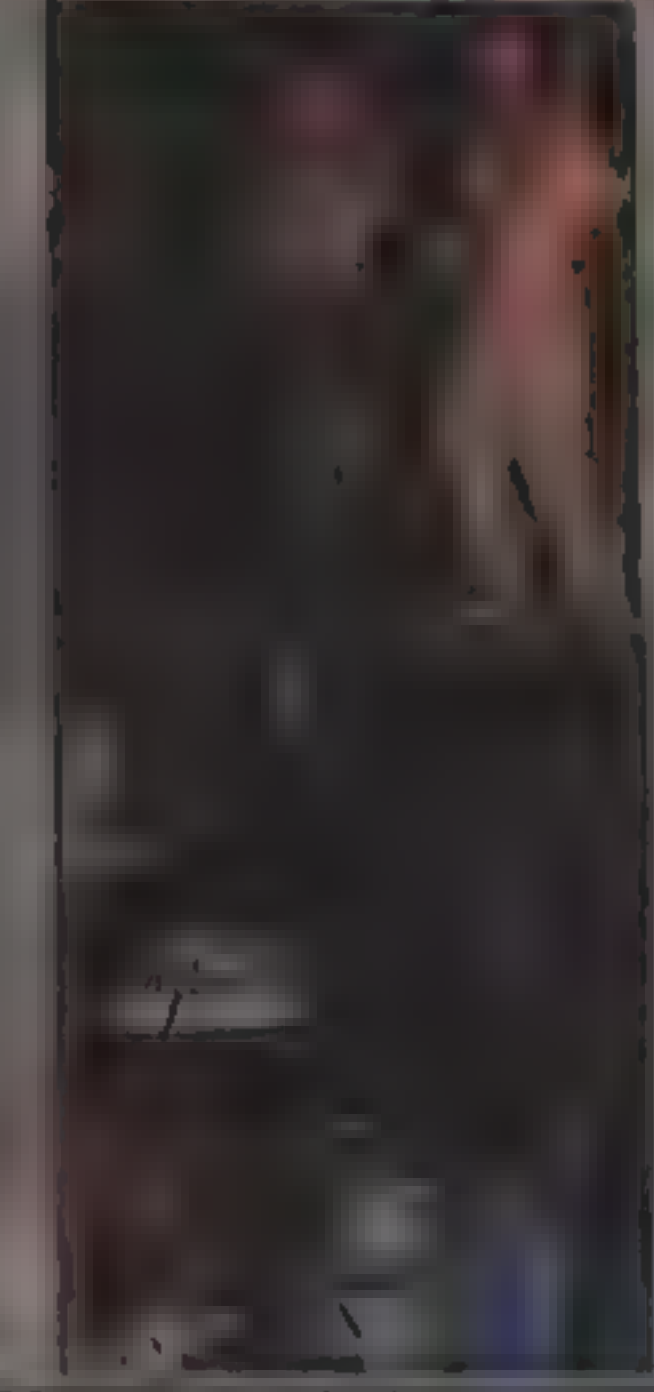


Poison the Well
Band

Danny Peck
with
Gaye Delorme



Saturday, June 7, 2008 - doors open at 7:00 PM



Souljah Lyah

Hosted by
Mike McDonald
The Singing Emcee

Gaye Delorme
and his band

Mocking Shadows
Rhythm & Blues Review

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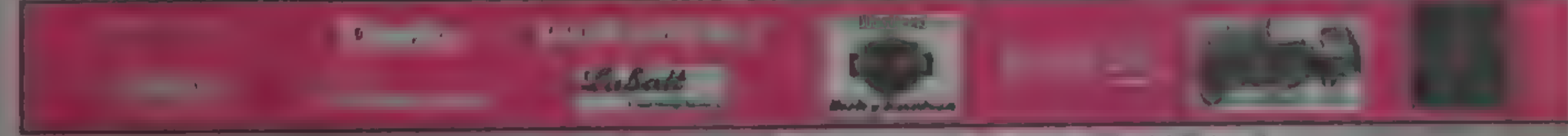
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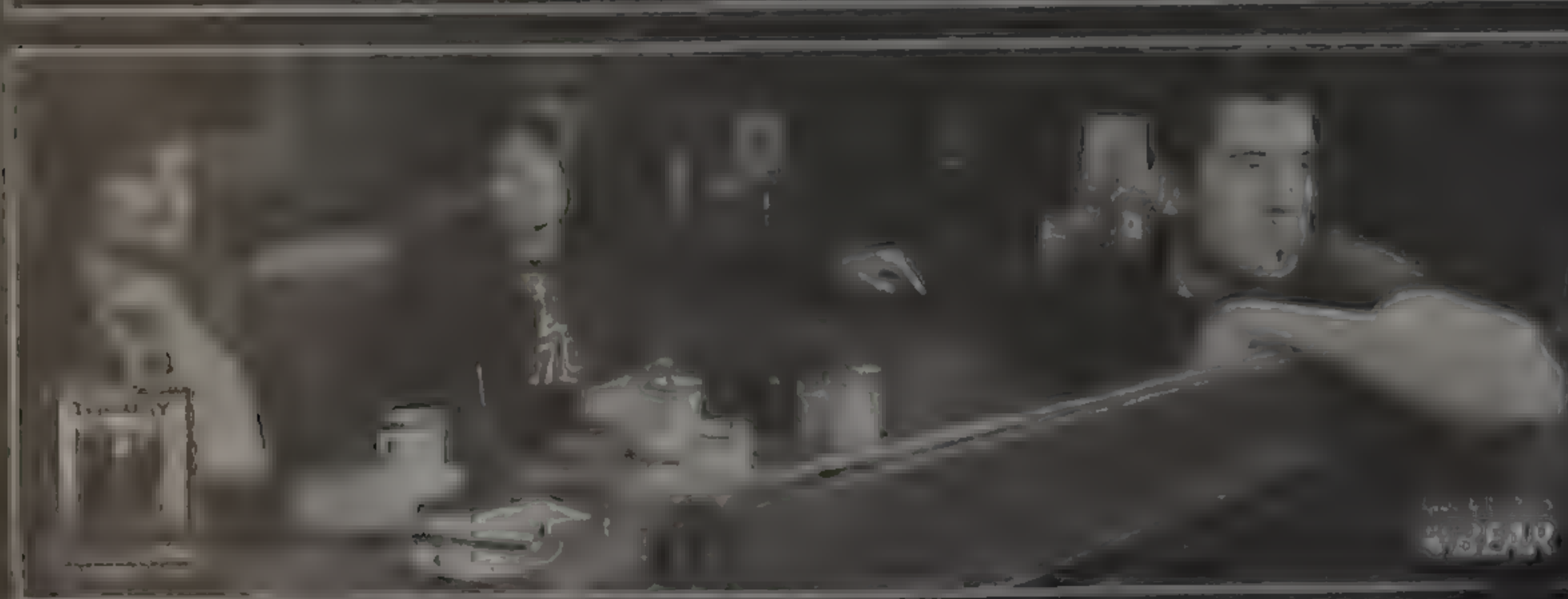
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MAY
27

THE

FRI
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Rutledge descends into open spaces

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vancouverweekly.com

Literary music. It's a label that conjures up an impression of songs that have some extra weight to them, as though they are able to say more than can usually be conveyed in just a few verses. In the case of Toronto songwriter **Justin Rutledge**, the term is particularly appropriate when considering his latest album, *Man Descending*. The record is shaped by 10 songs inspired by a collection of short stories—also titled *Man Descending*—written by Canadian author Guy Vanderhaeghe. Rutledge went so far as to include a quote from the book—"A man descending is propelled by inertia; the only initiative left him is whether or not he decides to enjoy the passing scene"—inside the album cover, using the imagery of Vanderhaeghe's words as a place to leap from and tell his own stories.

"It was inspired by that quote that I read that's on the cover of the booklet," Rutledge explains over the phone from his Toronto home. "I was reading that book and that line really stood out ... they're not literally based on any characters, but just the ideas and the motifs in those stories, and that story in particular, really resounded with the kind of lyrical aesthetic that I was going for. It was this sense of minimalism and space, so lyrically I didn't really tell stories in so much as I wanted to remain in the third person and kind of be more of an observer than a storyteller. I don't really think that there are many answers on the record. The stories that are happening within the songs are kind of left with little to no closure."

It's true that Rutledge offers up few tightly wrapped narratives with tidy endings, but that's not to say that the lyrics fly randomly through the songs. No, as easy as it might be to characterize Rutledge's songs as literary in style, it might be better to say that they are thoughtful, careful and restrained, but with a sense of something deeper—be it as simple as loss or hope—just below the surface. It's clear that the songwriter is dedicated to the writing part of the process, giving the words an added weight, an importance that at least equals the music.

"I do want to kind of imbue that sensibility into the music," he admits. "I don't want to risk getting too heady or anything like that, but it's really the only way that I feel comfortable writing. I don't want to risk coming off as a literary maniac or whatever, but I do regard lyrics and music with a tremendous amount of respect. I do feel that without that, what I'm doing would not amount to much."

IN A WORLD WHERE actors want to sing and singers want to act, it's easy to assume that Rutledge might have an interest in removing his words from musical accompaniment and

putting his pen to paper for something with a few more pages than the lyrics to a song take up. The truth, however, is that he's quite happy dedicating himself to his song craft and leaving the prose to those who feel the same passion for novels and short stories as Rutledge does for music.

"To me, writing—and I guess you could say this about songwriting—for example, writing a novel or short story, requires a tremendous amount of discipline and patience," he says quietly. "I like working in a four-minute context, because I think I

going through this. I don't like seeing myself from those books

"I'm kind of glad that I'm not a vinyl junkie yet," he adds with a chuckle. "My roommate has a tremendous amount of records, so I definitely see the value of it, but that would clutter up the place a little too much. I get addicted to something it's news."

CLUTTER IS SOMETHING that Rutledge made a concentrated effort to in all facets of *Man Descending*, opening up the music and letting it be

as much as possible. The effect is to throw the focus onto the lyrics, although it would be a mistake to dismiss the music as lightweight. In fact, there are more than just a few layers to the sounds here, and the wide-open sparseness serves to draw the listener deeper into the music. Rutledge relinquishes much of the credit for that feel—"I'm not a very great musician," he laughs—and hands it over to his band.

"I've been playing with those same guys for quite the time now," he says. "We kind of went in and recorded all the beds in two and a half days. It was kind of a surprise. I didn't expect to get that much—I only had about

four songs ready and the others I was working on, so the first day we had done those songs and then I had to come home and stay up the night and put together more. I had the skeletons of them, but they weren't lyrically finished. We did the beds and I finished up the lyrics afterwards.

"It was kind of an exercise in discipline," he continues. "The guys really pushed me, which was something I wasn't prepared for. I prefer to have everything ready—everything I need was there, I just much prefer to have everything there, the lyrics, and then to have everything worked out. It just so happened that I could kind of get the music together that time."

As important as preparation is when heading into the studio, just as valuable is the right combination of musicians and time spent playing together—two things that Rutledge and his band have on their side, resulting in open lines of communication between the musicians.

"When you can communicate an idea and when you know someone well enough that they can kind of understand where you're coming from, whether it's in music or design, they can understand that abstract structure, or abstract ideas, it definitely helps if you're on the right page with someone," Rutledge considers before adding with a laugh, "I don't have to pussyfoot around any more. They're free to tell me if my ideas are shit or great, I'm the same with them but mostly they've got more & ideas than bad ones." ▽



PREVIEW

THU, MAY 29 (8 PM)
JUSTIN RUTLEDGE
WITH KATHLEEN EDWARDS
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would get frustrated with writing—I've tried it before and I do get tremendously frustrated when I actually write a story. I kind of gave up on that because it was just too difficult. I don't understand how someone can write 300 pages following some kind of linear, chronological, or not chronological [path]—it just doesn't compute. I have a tremendous amount of respect for those that do, but it's something beyond me."

A novel might not be in Rutledge's immediate future, then, but his healthy respect for the process of writing carries over into an even healthier collection of books at home. In fact, Rutledge recently made an effort at downsizing the collection by selling some of the old ones off at a garage sale, though he laughs that he only managed to get somewhere around 20 books off of the shelf.

"The goal was to get rid of quite a few more," he concedes. "I have trouble selling anything, even if it's an album or a CD. I'm kind of bad that way. I haven't really caught on to the digital age yet—well, I have, but I need something that's tangible: a book or something. A book to me is something that kind of represents a period of time. You can go along your bookshelf and see where you were: 'Oh, I remember reading this book in 2004 when I was



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his life, he'll be a songwriter well listening to.

LIGHTS
LIGHTS
LIGHTS

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vueweekly.com
Timmins, Ontario is probably best known for giving us country superstar Shania Twain. I regret to say that it will now be known for giving us Valerie Poxleitner (aka Lights) whose bubblegum pop sounds like it was written and performed by a 12-year-old rather than by a college-aged girl. Despite a couple of neat and similar-sounding hits (such as those found in "Ice" and "February Air"), Lights can't quite pull off sticky sweet pop the way Robyn can. Pop music made independently tends to mislead people into thinking it will be far superior than, say, the kind of overdone pop Hilary Duff or Avril Lavigne put out. That's not the case here. I'd listen to Duff or Lavigne over Lights any day.

THE MARTINGALES
THE MARTINGALES
INDEPENDENT

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vueweekly.com
Considering that the band was born within the U of A's Math department, one might be forgiven for thinking that the Martingales might in fact play, well, math rock. Throw on the band's self-titled debut, though, and what jumps out is the moodiness of the trio's music: "antoba" opens the album up sounding very much like the soundtrack to a spaghetti western that took a wrong somewhere down south and landed up in Canada; "Time Travel Song" is a spooky vibe about it—sort of like Neil Young had used Crazy Horse as a template. On the other hand, "The Sleepwalker" is a dark and limping acoustic strummer, with drums rattling off like shots in the dark.

Martingales will be releasing their third album, Three Bananas Café, on Fri, May 23, 2008 at 7:30pm at the Commodore Ballroom.

PRIDDLE CONCERN
MY NAME IS BUDDY
MUSIC

ALAN PRIDDLE / alanpriddle@vueweekly.com
We're used to seeing staggering guest lists on solo-ish albums coming out of Toronto, and scene veteran Bill Priddle (treble charger) has made no exception with his debut as the Priddle Concern. Broken Social Scene and Stars are both well represented across the 13 tracks that make up *My Name is Buddy* (now Canadian!), with members like Brendan Canning, Evan Cranley and many Milan filling out instrumentation and vocals. Priddle's record is unusual in the sense that his production guest list is equally strong on big-guns—Louie Beck, Andy Magoffin and Dave Cadieux all lent ears and boards. Perhaps that's why *My Name is Buddy* sounds like a roosty Emerson Lake & Palmer, jagged and melodic, cut-up experimentation merged with classic rock. For all that production power, Priddle's sparer and more straightforward songs are his most successful.

Absence makes the wallet grow fatter

MUSIC | ENTER SANDOR

STEVEN SANDOR
steven@vueweekly.com

If you're ever in a band that has a hipster cache, follow this advice. Put out a couple of critically acclaimed records while you tour the club circuit in a crappy van. Then, break up and disappear. Then, if your acclaimed records are still making rounds in the indie shops or making it onto iTunes playlists a decade later, reform. And then do a stadium/arena tour. And cash in.

Seriously.

This past week, I got a Facebook iLike notice from My Bloody Valentine, with the band announcing its North American tour dates, including a Canadian date at Toronto's Ricoh Coliseum, which would be comparable in size to the AgriCom.

Yes, we are living in an era when the critics'-darling acts of the '70s, '80s, and '90s are reforming, playing on their hipster caches to draw crowds that they would never have dreamed of drawing in their heydays. In the case of MBV, the band knows that hipsters have never let go of the *Loveless* album; it is continually trotted out for critics' best-of lists. But, when the band was touring to support *Loveless*, it was playing to small venues of less than 1000 people per show. But, this reunion tour sees them playing in venues that are exponentially larger—and selling them out, even though the band hasn't released

a record of note in over 15 years.

Likewise, the New York Dolls were through Canada a couple of months back, playing to large venues; the funny thing is, through a series of documentaries, books and critics' reminiscences of the '70s New York punk scene, there are legions of young music fans who think that the New York Dolls were actually popular back in the days of punk's birth, and playing the same type of venues now that they did back then. No, the New York Dolls of the '70s, the same as the Ramones and Television and the Talking Heads, were lucky to play to a couple of hundred people at the time. They are also taking advantage of the hip reunion trend.

Edmonton, back in 2004, saw the Pixies play a reunion show at what was Red's. Even those on the guest list had to pay for their tickets; all they were guaranteed was a chance at tickets. It was rammed. But, on the Doolittle tour, would they have been able to play Red's? No way. Not nearly enough interest.

It's fascinating to watch influential bands break up and then come back to claim popularity. I guess breaking up and taking a decade off, for a band, is about the same as a painter dying.

I think we should all hold out for the members of Pavement to kiss and make up. If MBV can sell out arenas, Pavement could sell out giant football stadiums, right? v

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of Vue Weekly, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

HAUKU | QUICK SPINS

WHITEY AND TB PLAYER
quickspins@vueweekly.com

PADDY CASEY
ADDICTED TO COMPANY PT 1
SONY/BMG
Occasionally
He grows a pair, but mostly
He keeps them well tucked

SASKIA LAROO
REALLY JAZZY
LAROO RECORDS
Definitely mixes jazz
Hip hop and funk! Not bad for
White jazz Euro-MILF

MICHAEL McDONALD
SOUL SPEAK
UNIVERSAL MOTOWN
The man who once wrote
The world's catchiest song
Continues not to

TIFFANY EVANS
TIFFANY EVANS
SONY/BMG
Modern, energetic pop
Singing 'bout teen vaginas
'N nutsacks 'n shit

KING'S X
XV
INSIDE OUT
It's enough to make
Guitar store salesmen all
Wet their pants in glee

JAMIE'S ELSEWHERE
GUIDEBOOK FOR SINNERS TURNED SAINTS
VICTORY
Yeah... I scream, you scream,
We all scream so stupid kids
Will buy our album

JON AND ROY
ANOTHER NOON
INDEPENDENT
Alt-folkie duo,
Start out Simon, then take it
In the Garfunkel

LAL
DEPORTATION
PUBLIC TRANSIT
Sweet ass rhythms and
Soulful grooves lull me to sleep
Like Sade on ludes

KATAKLYSM
PREVAIL
NUCLEAR BLAST
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To the kidneys will make you
Piss blood—and like it

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SAT JUNE 21 CONSTANTINES
AT STANLEY ROOM
WITH GUESTS LADYHAWK

WED JUNE 25 THE COWBOY JUNKIES
HAGGARD'S PUB
THE TRINITY SESSION • 20TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

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CLUBS/LECTURES

AISH NETWORK General Hospital Auditorium, 11111 Jasper Ave • Benefits, Opportunities and Advocacy Available to AISH Recipients, information seminar featuring speakers are from Boyle Street Co-op, CMHA, Bissell Centre and more • May 30, June 13 (1-4pm) • \$10, (for both sessions) at TIX on the Square

ALBERTA SOCIETY OF ARTISTS - GILSON RAUCHER-SUTTON Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre (downstairs) 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq • Thu, May 29 (7pm) • Free public lecture

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL EDMONTON Metropolitan Church Hall, 8307-109 St • Myanmar and the right to food, meeting on the situation in Myanmar (Burma) following cyclone Nargis • Tue, May 27 (7:30pm)

ARTS OUTREACH BIG BANDS Alberta Society of Music for the Arts (497-4303) • For musicians of all levels to play a variety of music • Tue or Wed (7:30-9:30pm)

ANA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP Presbyterian Church basement, N. door, 6 Bernard Dr, Bishop St, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert • For adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families • Meet every Mon including holidays (7:30pm)

BIG STORY Westin Hotel, www.caj.ca (613-626-8061) • The Canadian Association of Journalists • Conference and awards gala • May 23-25

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS WEEK WITH HURT (479-1757) • Kick-Off Breakfast • Fri, May 23 (7-8:30am) • \$40

CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 101 St (479-1999) • Basketball; Mon (5-7pm) • Healing Circle; Mon (6-8pm) • Boxing; Mon/Thu (7-9pm), Tue (5-7pm) • Volleyball; Tue (6-8pm) • Sewing Circle; Tue (6-8pm) • Beadwork Class; Wed (6-8pm) • C.N.F.C. Pow-wow; Wed (6-8pm) • Hip-Hop Class; every Thu (5-7pm) • Cree Class; Thu (6-8pm) • Elders and Residency; Fri (all day) • Safe

Using and Harm Reduction; last Fri every month (11am-12pm) • Tobacco Reduction; every Fri • Drop-in Night; Fri (6-8pm)

CLUB BOULEVARD Italian-Canadian Senior Centre, 9111-110 Ave (988-4144) • Sat, May 26 • West coast swing lessons (8-9pm); Dance (9-10pm) • \$8 (member)/\$13 (guest)

COMMUNITY ACTION DASH! Giovanni Caboto Park, www.a4hc.ca • Action for Healthy Communities 10km run/5km Walk starting at Giovanni Caboto Park • Sun, May 25 (9am-11am) • \$15/free (child 12 and under)

CLUB CITIES AND THE DREAM IDEAS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE • 8331-104 St • Sierra Club Prairie, presented by Stephen Hazell and Lindsay Telfer • May 26 • Email jessicaw@sierraclub.ca for info

DYNAMICS OF HIV/AIDS HIV Edmonton, 11111 Jasper Ave, www.hivedmonton.com (488-5111) • Learn about HIV/AIDS, harm reduction, Hepatitis C, viral replication cycle, treatment side effects, local/global issues, determinants of health and rights • June 12-13 • Free, pre-register by May 25

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HIGHLANDS STREET FESTIVAL 101 Ave, 81st St (477-2422) • Outdoor Street Festival • Artists, crafters, designers, farmers, community groups, musicians and performers • Sat, May 26 (10am-5pm)

IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB Pleasant Community Hall, 10860-57 Ave (469-9776) • 6224/962-6561 • Informative, entertaining presentations, speakers, workshops, outings • 2nd and 4th Thu each month (8pm); Sept-May

MEDITATION • Gaden Samten Ling Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society • 11111 Jasper Ave, www.gadensamtenling.org (479-0014) by Kushi Lobsang Dhamchoe; beginner Tue (7pm); intermediate Wed (7pm); advanced Sun (11am-1pm) • **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization**, 208, 10132-105 St (425-1050) www.bkwsu.org; Raja Yoga Meditation • **Meditation and Buddhist practices** 10502-70 Ave, www.karmatashling.ca (633-6157) with Tibetan tradition Lama Ani Kunsang Beg • Welcome, instruction available; free; Wed (7-10pm)

MEL HURTING Old Timer's Cabin, 99 St (780-421-4500) • Hurting will discuss his new book, *Travels About Canada: Some Important, Some Astonishing and Some Truly Appalling Things All Canadians Should Know About Their Country* • Discussion and discussion throughout the evening • Thu, May 24 (7-10pm) • Free

NAIRN'S (WESTERN ALBERTA) BRAIN INJURY SOCIETY Westin Hotel (780-479 1757) • Brain Injury Awareness Week, kick-off breakfast featuring

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ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

After working for years in various jobs at San Francisco TV station KTVU, Frank Sommerville was promoted to the top of the heap—lead anchorman of the 10 o'clock news program. He promised that his new power wouldn't make him lazy or complacent. "Nobody will out-curious me," he bragged. I hope you will adopt the same motto for the foreseeable future, Aries. Your world needs you to be intensely inquisitive about what's transpiring. Uncoincidentally, asking lots of smart questions (and even some dumb ones) will also be the best possible thing you can do for your mental health.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

"The Irish don't know what they want and are prepared to fight for it," said British attorney Sidney Littlewood. I don't endorse that assertion, since it's an offensive ethnic stereotype, but I do want to borrow it to create a cautionary message for you. Please make sure that in the upcoming weeks no one can say to you, "You don't know what you want and yet you are prepared to fight for it." I definitely hope you aggressively champion an idea you believe in or a dream you care about, but you should get clearer about what exactly it is.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

Giuseppe Rebaudi and Silvie Basain started dating in 1952. This year they finally decided to take the next step. After a 56-

year courtship, the 101-year-old Italian man wed his 98-year-old girlfriend. I predict that a comparable event will bless your love life in the second half of 2008, Gemini. Some romantic development that has been in the works for a long time will finally ripen into its full expression. Expect news about this soon.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

If you're normal, you periodically feel little surges of anger that you don't express. Over time they may accumulate into a mass of blind rage that can hurt innocent bystanders, damage your relationships, and tempt you to punch holes in walls. Is there a way to keep this from happening? Yes, there is: it's my patented Laughing Tantrum Release Therapy, a five-minute ritual that you perform once a week in a private place with no witnesses. For four minutes, you fume, seethe, curse, and yell. For the final 60 seconds, you compel yourself to laugh uncontrollably. This week would be an excellent time to start integrating Laughing Tantrum Release Therapy into your routine.

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

Guerrilla gardening is my favourite kind of prank: a benevolent one. The practitioners of this growing global movement are fertility agitators who sneak onto unused fields under cover of broad daylight, often in urban landscapes, and cultivate flowers, herbs and food crops. In accordance with the astrological omens, I recommend that you experiment with a metaphorically similar project in the upcoming weeks. Without necessarily seeking permission or expecting appreciation, cultivate beauty and value in a place that's neglected or going to waste.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

"Dear Star-Reader Brezsky: You are the only wizard who can save me. I have a bad job—just \$72 000 a year—plus a lover who's not all that cute and a home that's not worth as much as it used to be. My health is good but I hate my nose and ass. Can't afford a BMW or a vacation to Spain. My world is unraveling! Hope is fading! Please tell me what to do!" —Virgo on the Verge. Dear On the Verge: I suggest that you temporarily suspend your strident yearning. This is one time when it's important to cultivate more appreciation for what you actually have. I urge you and all Virgos to turn your attention away from what you think you lack, and devote your psychic energy to loving what is.

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

Even if you're not sick, you need some medicine. What kind of medicine? The kind that can transform what's pretty good about your life into something that's really great; the kind that will super-animate your merely average efforts and blast you free of any lackadaisical attitudes you've come to accept as reasonable. This medicine won't come in the form of a pill or a potion, but rather will be produced by your own body if and when you slip away from your comfort zone and go out to play in the frontier. Be your own doctor, Libra. Break your own trance. Crack your own code. Escape your own mind games.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

Your life in the coming weeks may resemble a dream of sailing deep beneath the waves in a yellow submarine where a nonstop party is going on. It'll be as if

you're plowing through deep, heavy, murky waters inside a brightly-lit high-tech vessel that is controlled by slightly chaotic connoisseurs of fun. You may feel a bit claustrophobic, but that could encourage your imagination to run wild, which will be a good thing as long as you don't believe everything it tells you. In conclusion, Scorpio, get ready for entertaining adventures that will range from being a bit creepy to totally delicious.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

During America's first war on Iraq in 1991, I prophesied that one day there'd be a Disneyland in Baghdad. It was a surrealistically sardonic send-up of my native country's imperialism. But now, 17 years later, my absurd prediction is coming true. The same American company that designed the original Disneyland has announced plans to build the Baghdad Zoo and Entertainment Experience. If workers survive bombing, looting and sniper fire, the first part of the 50-acre amusement park will open this year. While I question whether building a monument to fun is a good idea in an actual war zone, it's an excellent metaphor for you to apply to your personal life. Even if you can't extinguish a certain conflict that has been raging, try to introduce a spirit of play into the proceedings.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

I'm issuing a too-much-of-a-good-thing warning. Soaking up too much pleasure could dilute the value of your bliss. Expressing too much personal power could scare away valuable allies who are competent but not entirely confident. Pushing too hard on behalf of your cre-

ative pragmatism could subtly undermine the labour of love you've worked so hard on. Therefore, Capricorn, please accept my invitation to enjoy a period of rest and assimilation. You can return later for another round of pure intensity.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

Studies show that at least half the population would give up sex for a few minutes. They'd be rewarded for their abstinence with a free 60-inch plasma TV. But if they offered a deal like that anytime, Aquarius, I suggest you reject it. According to my analysis of the omens, it will be crucial to your mental, physical and spiritual health to have regular erotic encounters during the coming weeks. If you don't have a partner, have fun with your imagination. The angel in your dream is your personal version of God or Goddess.

PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

A professional dominatrix I know says many of her clients are men whose wives give them excessive authority over their people. When she's bossing around these honchos, she sees herself as an agent of karmic correction, counteracting a dangerous lopsidedness in their psyches. I think this up, Pisces, because you're in a phase when you should really say no to the power that exists in your own sphere. You're a swaggering alpha male or female put in a stint as a humble servant. If you're normally a timid soul, flex your willpower with feisty abandon. If you're neither control freak nor a doormat—and therefore have no karma to balance—spend quality time meditating on how to gain more power over the wild ebbs and flows of your imagination. ▀

DOUG RANKINORE • Friday, May 23 (7-8pm) • \$40

AND COMMUNITY PUBLIC SPEAKER
ETC 1-017, Maier Learning Centre, U of A
www.alberta.ca/parkland • Oil and
Struggles Over Labour and Learning:
The until June 5 (7-8:30pm) • **Aboriginal**
and Work with John Carpenter, Debbie
May 22 (7-8:30pm) • **Parkland's Latest**
Oil, Gas Sector and Labour in Alberta
Thompson; May 29 (7-8:30pm)

MARKET ORGANIC MARKET (780-433-6807) •
Ideas for Cooking Gluten-free with
Arnold; Thu, May 22 (6:30-8pm) • **Run for**
Planet with Matt Hill and Stephanie Tait; Fri,
May 23 (3-4pm) • **Macrobiotics** with Connie
May 23 (6:30-8pm); \$10 pre-reg-
(\$10 coupon returned)

ALBERT CHAPTER SENIORS UNITED NOW
Albert Legion, Tache Street, St. Albert (418-
20) • Meeting with speaker St. Albert Mayor,
Crouse • May 25 (1:30pm)

THE MASTERS MOVIE PREMIERE Unity
Edmonton, 13210-106 Ave (913-6466)
UnityEdmonton.ca • Fri, May 23 (7pm)

WALKING NATURE WALK
Botanic Garden (780-987-3054) • A
walk along the Bobby Dyde Nature Trail
meet at the visitor centre booth at
10pm • May 25 (Nature Trail 1:30-3:30pm) •
admission rates, pre-register

THOUGHTFUL TUESDAY Steeps Tea Lounge,
18-82 Ave (988-8105) • Documentary
Mont City • Tue, May 27 (7pm)

MASTERS CLUBS • Chamber
Chambers Club: Chamber of Commerce,
9990 Jasper Ave (459-5206); Thu (6pm) •
MacEwan: Grant MacEwan College, Rm 5-238,
100-104 Ave (633-3921); Fri (noon-1pm) •
Norators Toastmasters Club: Londonderry
Library www.norators.com; Wed (7-
8pm) • **Power Speakers:** Grant MacEwan
Centre for the Arts, Rm 437, 10045-156 St (459-
42); Wed (7-9pm) • **Pursuers:** Best Western
Park Inn, 5116 Gateway Boulevard (457-
40); Wed (7-9pm) • **Chanticleer:** Kingsway
Mildred Health Building, 131 Airport Rd (498-
464/474-1138) Thu (7-8:30am) • **Upward**
Norquest College, Rm 601, 10215-108 St
(43720/488-4098); every Wed (7-8:45pm)

URETTE SYNDROME Academy of King
Ed, 8525-101 St, North door (1-866-824-9764)
Support meetings for TS adults and parents of
kids • 1st Wed every month until June (7pm)

WOMEN IN BLACK In front of the Old
Athcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil the
1st and 3rd Sat (10-11am) every month, stand in
silence for a world without violence

WOMEN'S LUNCHEON McDougall United
Church, 10025-101 St (428-1818) • **Women in**
Issues: Issues and Inspiration featuring speaker
Blakeman • Sat, May 31 (11:30am-
1:00pm) • \$8, pre-register by May 27

QUEER LISTINGS

FIRM SUNNYBROOK-RED DEER Sunnybrook
United Church, Red Deer (403-347-6073) • Affirm
welcome LGBTQ people and their friends, family,
and allies meet the 2nd Tue (7pm) every month

WOODY'S NITE CLUB 11725B Jasper Ave (488-
2621) • Open nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8pm-3pm •
Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and
Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and
Olivia and Donnataville NE1 in The GoDonna
Bar. DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon:
Natar strip contest with Mia Fellow, midnight,
WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and
pinny, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with
Sexy Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest
with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ
WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'em
swim! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid
drop, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night
women only, free pool and tourney, DJ
Arrowchaser

EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT) Unitarian
Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 St • A group of
gay men and their admirers who have com-
mon social interests meet the 2nd Sun (2:30pm) of
every month for a social period, a short meeting
with a guest speaker, discussion panel or a potluck
lunch. Special interest groups meet for other social
activities throughout the month. email edmon-
ton@yahoo.ca, www.primetimerswww.org/edmon-

GBT SPORTS AND RECREATION
www.teamedmonton.ca • Women's Drop-In
Recreational Badminton; Oliver School Gym,
1027-118 St (465-3620); Wed (6-7:30pm) •
Potcamp; St. Alphonsus, 11624-81 St; Mon (7-
8pm) bootcamp@teamedmonton.ca • Bowling:
Gateway Lanes, 100 3414 Gateway Blvd; Sat (5-
8pm); bowling@teamedmonton.ca • Running:
on Tue, Thu, running@teamedmonton.ca •
Swimming: NAJ pool, 11762-106 St; Tue (8-9pm),
Wed (7:30-8:30pm); swimming@teamedmonton.ca •
Volleyball: 101 Amiskwacy Academy,
International Airport Terminal just off Kingsway;
recreational (8-10pm);
volleyball@teamedmonton.ca; Thu
intermediate; volleyball@teamedmonton.ca •
Yoga (Hatha), Free Lion's Breath Yoga; every Sun
(3-5pm); yoga@teamedmonton.ca

CLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB Boats, 10242-106 St
(47-3343) • Crossdressers, transsexuals, friends
and supporters meet 2nd Thu each month
groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton_illu-

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based
organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-iden-
tified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student,
academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd
Thu every month (fall/winter terms); Speakers
Series. Contact Kris (kvells@ualberta.ca)

LIVING POSITIVE 404, 10408-124 St,
www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/488-
5768) • Providing confidential peer support to
people living with HIV • Tue (7-9pm); Support
group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

MADELINE SANAM FOUNDATION Faculté
St. Jean, Rm 3-18 (490-7332) • Program for HIV-
AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction
in French, English and other African languages •
3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) every month • Free
(member)/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB
www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm •
Recreational and competitive swimming with
coaching, beginners encouraged to participate.
Socializing after practices • Every Tue, Thu

PFLAG Pride Centre, 9540-111 Ave • Support
meeting for parents, families and friends of les-
bian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people •
1st Tue (7pm) every month • Information phone
Ruby at 436-1998 after 6pm, or
edmontonab@pflagcanada.ca

PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON 9540-111 Ave,
www.pridecentreofedmonton.org (488-3234) •
Open Tue-Fri 1pm-10pm, Sat 12-6:30pm • LGBT
Seniors Drop-in: Social time for seniors of all gen-
ders to get together with tea and snacks; every
Thu and Tue (1-4:30pm) • CA: Meet every Thu
(7pm) • Womonspace: Board meeting 1st Sun
every month (10:30am-12:30pm) • Youth Movie
Night: Fri (6pm) • Suit Up and Show Up: AA big
book study group; every Sat (12pm) • Youth
Understanding Youth: Youth (up to 25 years) sup-
port and social group; every Sat (7-9pm) e-mail
yuy@shaw.ca • Trans Education/Support Group: A
place to come and be yourself. Support and edu-
cation for Transsexual, Transgendered, Intersexed,
Two-Spirited and questioning individuals at any
point in transition; 1st and 3rd Sun every month
(2-4pm); www.albertatrans.org • Men Talking
with Pride: Men's social and discussion group
facilitated by Rob Wells,
robwells780@hotmail.com; every Sun (7pm) • HIV
Support Group; 2nd Mon every month (7pm) •
TTIQ Alliance; support meeting, Transgender,
Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning. Education,
Advocacy and Support for Men, Women and
Youth; 2nd Tue every month (7:30pm) • PFLAG: A
support and resource group for parents and
friends of GLBT individuals; 1st Tue every month
(7pm) • Youth Theatre Project: Youth-led group
addresses homophobia through theatre and a
video project; every Wed (7pm), Email
Emily@pridecentreofedmonton.org • YouthSpace:
A safe and fun drop-in for LGBTQ youth (up to 25);
Tue-Sat (3-7pm)

ROBERTSON-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH
10209-123 St (482-1587) www.rwuc.org • Soul
OUTing: an LGBT-focused alternative worship •
3rd Sun every month (7pm); worship Sun
(10:30am); people of all sexual orientations wel-
come. A LGBT monthly book club and a bi-monthly
film night. Call for more info or email jraven-
croft@rwuc.org

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 11526-76 Ave
(436-1555) • People of all sexual orientations are
welcome • Every Sun (10am worship)

WOODY'S 11723 Jasper Ave (488-6557) • Open
Daily (noon) • Sat-Tue Karaoke with Tizzy and
Patrick • Sat-Sun Pool Tournaments

SPECIAL EVENTS

EDMONTON RUSSIAN ARTS FESTIVAL St.
John's Cultural Centre, 10611-110 Ave (240-9282)
• Russian music, art exhibition, folk dances, sou-
venirs, Russian language CD/DVDs, traditional
Russian desserts • May 25 (1-5pm) • \$10
(adult)/\$5 (student/senior) (door)

EVERY LIFE MATTERS, SIYAWELA Coast
Terrace Plaza Hotel, 10155-105 St • South
African Wine Tasting Celebration and Silent
Auction; a fundraising benefit for South African
orphans of HIV/AIDS • Sat, May 31 (7:30-
10:30pm) • \$55 (incl. wine, hors d'oeuvres and
entertainment) at TIX on the Square

FORM VS FUNCTION Naked Cyber, 10354
Jasper Ave • Beams spring concert with fashion
show featuring Reinhard von Berg, Don Ross,
Gene Kosowan, Philip Jagger, Morse Code, John
Armstrong, GlamBam, Gary Lee, Bill Damur; fash-
ions by Morse Code Sweet Carousel GlamBam;
closing set Cockatoo • \$5 (BEAMS member)/\$10
(non-member) • Sat, May 24 (7pm)

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL
Arden Theatre and other locations, St. Albert,
www.childfest.ca • Celebrating performing, liter-
ary and visual arts for children • May 27-31 •
Main Stage: \$10 (adult)/\$8.50 (child)/\$2 (site
activity tickets) at the Arden box office 459-1542,
TicketMaster 451-8000

MOVIE NIGHT FUNDRAISER Edmonton
Ukrainian Centre, 11018-97 St • Showing of two
documentaries *How Cuba Survived the Peak Oil*
Crisis, followed by *Fidel: The Untold Story*.
Fundraiser for the Che Guevara Volunteer Work
Brigade • Fri, May 23 (7pm) • Admission by
donation, proceeds to the Canadian desk of the
Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples
(ICAP), to be used by the Che Guevara Volunteer
Work Brigade • information at
kat.carmichael@gmail.com

RELAY FOR LIFE Foote Field, U of A (780-455-
7181) • Canadian Cancer Society (CCS), 12-hour,

overnight, non-competitive event that involves
teams of ten who take turns walking or running
around a track • May 24

**ST. ALBERT KINSMEN RAINMAKER RODEO
AND EXHIBITION** • www.rainmaker.ab.ca •
May 23-25

**SPREEPARK COLLECTIVE, WILKOMEN IN
SPREEPARK** TransAlta Arts Barns, 10330-84 Ave
• A dramatic musical installation, a collaboration
between local artists, actors, dancers, designers
and musicians. Different bands will perform each
night, each with their musical influences •
\$15/\$35 (all three nights) at TIX on the Square •
May 22-24 (7:30pm)

KARAOKE

BLIND PIG 32 St. Anne Street, St. Albert (418-
6332) • Wed/Fri: Karaoke with Shelly

BILLY BOB'S SPORTS BAR Continental Inn,
Stony Plain Rd (484-7751) • Wed (8pm-12am);
Thu, Fri, Sat (9:30pm-1:30am); with Right Said Ed

CASTLEDOWN'S PUB 16753-100 St • Tue
(9pm-1am); with Off-Key Entertainment

CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB 37 Millbourne Rd
• Tue (9pm) with Sonia/Prosound

COOK COUNTY Road to Big Valley Jamboree
Karaoke contest every Fri until the final on June
27; 8-10pm

CROWN AND ANCHOR 15277 Castledowns Rd
(472-7696) • Thu (10:30pm) • Wed: Name that
Tune

ECCO PUB 9605-66 Ave • Sat (9pm-1am)

GAS PUMP 10166-114 St (489-4841) • Tue/Wed
(9pm-1:30am); Gord's Best Live Singing Show

HAWKEYES TOO 10044-102 St (421-9898) • Fri,
Sat (8pm-midnight); Hot Karaoke Productions

HOOLIGANZ PUB 10704-124 St (452-1168) •
Fri: Karaoke with Krista, Liquid Entertainment

INGLEWOOD PUB 12402-118 Ave (451-1390) •
Thu, hosted by Gordo; Fri/Sat: hosted by Jolly
Greg Giant (9:30pm-2am)

JASPER PLACE HOTEL 15326 Stony Plain Rd
(489-1906) • Mon (9pm-1am); Karaoke

KNIGHTS PUB SOUTH 19 Ave, 105 St (461-
0587) • Fri/Sat (10pm-2am); Gord's Best Live
Singing Show

LAMONT HOTEL • Last Fri every month (10pm-
2am); with ProSound Productions

LIONSHEAD PUB Coast Terrace Inn, 4440
Gateway Blvd (431-5815) • Sun (8pm); With
Evolution Entertainment

MAZADAR 10725-104 Ave (429-4940) • Fri
(5pm-late); with Chris

MOJO'S Best Western Hotel, Fort Saskatchewan
(999-7888) • Fri (9:30pm); with Sonia/Prosound
Productions

MONA LISA'S PUB 9606-118 Ave (477-7752) •
Thu, Fri, Sat: sound and songs with great hosts

NEWCASTLE PUB 6108-90 Ave (490-1999) •
Thu

NEW WEST HOTEL 15025-111 Ave • Sun (3-
7pm)

NIKITA'S 10162-100A St (414-0606) • Tue, Thu
(7pm-12am); with Shelley

O'CONNOR'S IRISH PUB 9013-88 Ave (465-
4834) • Thu (8pm); Terra with Mr. Entertainment

ON THE ROCKS 11740 Jasper Ave (482-4767) •
Mon (9:30pm); with Wil Clark and Mr.
Entertainment Wed (9:30pm) Name That Tune •
Thu (9pm); Salsa Rocks with Cuban salsa DJ

ORLANDO'S 1 15163-121 St (457-1649) • Wed,
Thu, Sun (9:30pm-2am); with TLC Entertainment

OVERDRIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PUB 6401-104
St (988-5457) • Sat (9pm); hosted by Jenny Joy

ROCK PUB AND GRILL 570 St Albert Tr, St
Albert (458-5571) • Karaoke Tue (9pm-1am); TLC
Entertainment

ROSARIOS 11715-108 Ave (447-4727) • Longest
running Karaoke bar; 7 days a week

ROSIE'S BAR AND GRILL • Downtown, 10604-
101 St (423-3499) • Mon-Sat (9pm); Sun (7pm);
with Ruth • Highstreet, 10315-124 St (482-
1600); daily (9:30pm) • Old Strathcona, 10475-
80 Ave (439-7211); Thu-Sat (9:30pm-1:30am) •
99 St, 63 Ave; Thu-Sat (9pm-1am); with Off-Key
Entertainment

ST. MICHAEL HOTEL • 1st Fri each month
(9pm-1am); with ProSound Productions

SHERLOCK HOLMES 1650 WEM • Karaoke
Industry Night Sundays; Terra with Mr.
Entertainment; 9pm-2am • Rock Band Mondays:
Terra with Mr. Entertainment, play for fun, all
skill levels; 8pm start

SILVER MARTINI 10688-156 St • Every 2nd Sat
(9pm-1am); with ProSound

THORSBY HOTEL • Sat (9:30pm-1:30am); with
ProSound Productions

TRANSIT HOTEL 12720 Fort Rd • Thu (7:30-
11:30pm); with ProSound Productions

WILLY'S PUB 990 Lakeland Village, Sherwood Pl
• Every 2nd Sat (9:30pm-1:30am)

X-WRECKS LOUNGE 9303-50 St • Wed (7:30-
11:30pm); with Sonia/Prosound

YESTERDAY'S 112-205 Carnegie Dr, St. Albert
(459-0295) • Thu (9:30pm-2am); with Off-Key
Entertainment

Perez, Ellen and homophobia

1997
QUEERMONTON
TAMARA GORZALKA
tam@vueweekly.com

A couple weeks ago the summer camp I
volunteer for hit the big time. Well the
blog big time, anyway; we were fea-
tured on Perez Hilton's website.

For those that don't know who he is
(lucky you), Hilton is one of those inter-
esting new personalities known as a
celebrity blogger. The openly gay Hilton
doesn't do all that much writing on his
site: his posts are generally relegated to
scrawling juvenile disses on paparazzi
photos and insulting stars. He's known
both for his large list of celebrity pals
and his propensity for outing stars.

At some point Hilton decided to pur-
sue some philanthropic endeavours on
occasion and started posting about
organizations that he believes should be
supported. Camp fYrefly, Canada's
largest leadership retreat for queer
youth, somehow found its way to one of
those spots. And the response from
readers wasn't exactly pleasant.

Some wondered why a camp like fYre-
fly exists; shouldn't queers not ghettoize
themselves? A perfectly good suggestion
except for the part where most main-
stream camps don't accept gays or pro-
vide a safe atmosphere for queer youth.
And nobody asks band camp kids why
they're segregating themselves.

Commentators on his blog called par-
ticipants "pole smokers," "carpet
munchers," suggested putting them "in
crates" and the old standby, "AIDS kills
fags dead." Johnny Rocko asks, "Can I
send a hit squad instead of money?"

After all the angry, hurtful and
depressing posts from all the gay-bash-
ers, a few past participants and support-
ers started leaving their messages of
support, but there was no arguing with
the homophobes, most of whom proba-
bly never returned to the page after
leaving their hateful remarks. It's hard to
imagine why so many homophobes
would even visit Hilton's site, but maybe
it's as simple as a reply left by Kati: "I'm
here for the gossip! Stop with your
f**king worthwhile causes."

This disconcerting shout-out turned
out to be the first in a string of homopho-
bic encounters I was privileged enough to
come across in the last couple weeks. I
say privileged only with half sarcasm,
since up until now homophobes and I
haven't spent a lot of time butting heads.
Sometimes the dose of reality is neces-
sary to put things into perspective.

I'VE SEEN a lot of different doctors and
I've never had a problem before. I like to
think that I was lucky enough to get
accepting physicians but, to be honest,
most of them probably just didn't know.
As much as I feel like a walking Big Ol'
Dyke billboard, other people's clueless-
ness is always surprising.

I already wasn't liking this new doctor
since he wasn't empathetic and was defi-
nitely uninterested. My sexuality didn't
come up until the prospect of a medica-
tion causing complications with pregnan-
cy. He asked if I had a boyfriend and I said
I had a partner. He prescribed a pill to take
to avoid pregnancy problems. I told him I
don't sleep with men. He asked, "Is some-
thing wrong?" as though all women

should be busying themselves with jump-
ing on any dude around. When I blurted
out in the most simple terms possible that
my partner was a woman, that I was
interested in women and that pregnancy
was not going to happen, he paused for a
great while then hit me with, "Did some-
thing bad happen to you when you were
young to make you that way?"

Trauma leading to me liking girls?
Well, the first was named Gabrielle and
aside from her lover Xena's untimely
death, there wasn't much trauma
involved, just a lot of campy violence and
lesbian subtext. The second, as my mom
so kindly pointed out later, was Faith in
Buffy the Vampire Slayer, again with
copious amounts of violence and subtext.
Nice try though, Doc, next time you might
want to take a shot at diagnosing my ill-
ness instead of playing Dr Laura.

The frightening thing was how vulnera-
ble I felt. A physician has you at your most
vulnerable and it's hard not to wonder if
their care can be delivered on a sliding
scale. I know I've seen it at restaurants
and clothing stores with slightly less
engaged service. But the difference with
doctors and people who work in retail is
that if they can't be bothered to find a
shirt in my size, it'll have slightly less
impact on my overall quality of life.

The next day I landed on the business
end of a co-worker's sudden homophobic
tirade about her horror at hearing about
my relationship when I made the appar-
ently insulting suggestion of comparing
it to hers. Lesson learned.

The International Day Against Homo-
phobia is held on May 17, to commemo-
rate the date that homosexuality was
removed from the World Health Organi-
zation's International Classification of
Diseases just 18 years ago. I guess my
way of marking this year was to get a
reminder of why these sorts of projects
are still so necessary.

The International Lesbian and Gay
Association (ilga.org) has published an
easy to read and thoroughly terrifying
map of state-sponsored homophobia
around the globe. Their report states
that 86 countries jail people engaging in
gay or lesbian activity, with punishments
as severe as the death penalty in seven.

The map also includes marriage and
domestic partnership rights as well as
protection legislation. It's hard to look at
the large pink areas that denote coun-
tries which still punish homosexual acts
with the death penalty.

Same-sex nuptials could start happen-
ing in California in as early as three
weeks from now after the California
Supreme Court declared that homosexu-
als have the right to marry. The moder-
ately conservative court likened the issue to
interacial marriages and said there was
no justifiable reason why the state should
bar gay marriage.

Ellen Degeneres announced on her talk
show last Friday that because it is now
legal, she and partner Portia de Rossi are
planning to wed. Mundane, daily updates
on the planning of the ceremony will
surely be shown each episode, and as
boring as I might find them, the gay wed-
ding of one of television's biggest person-
alities could do more for gay acceptance
than a thousand court decisions. Abolish-
ing homophobia could lie with the likes of
the Ellens and Perezs of the world. And
that's a scary thought. ♥

CLASSIFIEDS

IF YOU WANT TO PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD IN VUE WEEKLY, PLEASE PHONE 426-1996. DEADLINE IS NOON THE TUESDAY BEFORE PUBLICATION

DATING

Eight Minute Date- Speed Dating for Singles: Wed May 28 at The Gallery Bar Ages: 18-27, 28-40 & 41-56. Register by calling 457-8535 or on line at www.eightminutedate.ca

EDUCATIONAL

On-Camera Acting Intensive
Calgary June 9-20, limited seats
www.vadastudios.com

HELP WANTED

Edmonton's newest live music venue looking for all positions: door to bar manager. Exp. preferred. Email resumes to: derakpraght@shaw.ca

Looking for fun, outgoing, challenge driven to work for a great boss in a fun, competitive work environment this summer. Make \$14-\$25 per hour and get paid what you're worth. Full time! We paint houses, businesses and everything in between. Email nkawulka@gmail.com

The Cutting Room is looking for Assistants and Stylists
Please drop off your resume to
10536 124 Street

Arbour Restaurant in Rutherford House seeks Sunday Cook for our busy teahouse on campus. Restaurant experience asset, will train. Call 422-2697 or email arbourrestaurant@rutherfordhouse.ca

Drivers wanted: \$15+/hr, Wed (night), Thu (day), perm/PT. Must have mini-van or truck. Looking for reliable, responsible person. Ph 907-0570

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DRINK COFFEE, TALK ON THE PHONE, MAKE MONEY!

Looking for the perfect job with good people, great pay, flexible hours, all while supporting the arts? Then call Jacques at 408-9111

PH: Apr 24-June 12 08

STUDENTS & SENIORS

4 Hours - AM
or
4 Hours - PM
Mon-Sat

PHONE
702-5519

FRAMING

PICTURE FRAMES

MOVIE POSTER SHOP

Affordable picture frame options. Music Posters.
8126 Gateway Blvd. 439-0408

LOST PETS

Lost Piper, green Mini Macaw, Castledowns. Plucked chest from stressful previous home. Please talk to him, "Cracker, Piper?" "Toast?"
LARGE REWARD. Kim 452-1744, 233-0497.

SPACE FOR RENT

Commercial space for rent. Character bldg. 9523 - Jasper Ave. 1000/mo ut. incl. Perfect for tattooing, screen printing, photography, massage- type business.
Michelle 907-1405

MUSICAL EQUIPMENT

TOA PA. 300 watt, 6 channel E.Q., Reverb, Comp. c/w 3 way ported 15" Yamaha Cabinets suitable for garage bands, community halls, DJs. \$1200 963-4984

Upright piano suitable for conversion to bar, CD rack, fish tank. Requires extensive work. \$300 963-4984

MUSICAL INSTRUCTION

Drum teacher with studio seeks students for private lessons
Call Jared at 719-5077

MODAL MUSIC INC. 221-3116

Quality music instruction since 1981.
Guitarist. Educator.
Graduate of GMCC music program.

WORKSHOPS

DRAMAWORKS & ARTSTREK Theatre workshops for adults and teens. July 2008. 422-8162 / www.theatreinlberta.com

ARTIST TO ARTIST

FREE+FREE+FREE+FREE+FREE
FREE+FREE+FREE+FREE+FREE
ARTIST/NO PROFIT CLASSIFIEDS
Need a volunteer? Forming an acting troupe? Want someone to jam with? Place up to 20 words FREE. Ads more than 20 words are subject to regular price or cruel editing. Free ads will run for four weeks, if you want to renew or cancel please phone Glenys at 780-426-1996/fax 426-2889/e-m glenys@vueweekly.com or drop it off. Deadline is noon the Tue before publication. Placement will depend upon available space

ARTIST TO ARTIST

Mostly Water Theatre accepting submissions for Metro Digital Shorts. Submissions must be a maximum of 5 mins, to be shown on June 14, 9pm at Metro Cinema. Submit **deadline is June 4**. For more information please contact Trent Wilkie at 886-6293 or trentwilkie@gmail.com

Looking for director for Fringe play (drama), norton-mah@hotmail.com

Musical Director wanted for Musical Comedy for Edmonton Fringe, produced by Maggots Inc. Contact Chris at 906-9239 or email at chris3rivera@yahoo.com

Photographer seeks interesting, strong, photogenic faces. Sitter will be repaid with free photographs. Gerry contact@gerryaum.com, www.gerryaum.com

Harcourt House Arts Centre: Call for Submissions for Artist in Residence Program. Submission deadline: **May 31** Residency begins Nov. 1, 2008

The Alberta Society of Artists with the Edmonton Public Library is presenting a free public lecture with Eileen Raucher-Sutton on **Thu, May 28, 7pm** at the Stanley A. Milner Theatre, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq

MUSICIANS

Bass player with vocals wanted for three-piece band. Western Canadian roots-based music.
www.marymachura.com Marv @ 240-1509

Mature bassist seeks pianist for pleasure, recording and poss gigs. Contact Darrelbeardeer@yahoo.ca

Edmt based prof band seeks prof lead guitar player, back-up vocals an asset. No use of drugs or alcohol. See www.julyrocks.com for info, audition (May 24) Ph Shane 203-7638, Roland 903-8756

Looking for drummer for 3-piece indie rock project. Must be open minded. Ph Chuck at 235-0822

Pro-level bass player wanted for original/covers rock trio. Back-up vocals over 25 under 45. Please be serious and professional. 860-8277

Buskers wanted Aug. 2 outdoor family event in Stony Plain. Must register. spcountrymarket@hotmail.com 445-9114 Seeking lively, friendly entertainers

Drummer wanted for 3-piece indie rock band
Call Jake 235-0821

Drummer/bass player wanted, infit: Black Label Society, Overkill, Exodus, Anthrax, Suicidal Tendencies. Must have wheels and no BSI Bleed Black Label Society, call Critter, 660-6923

VOLUNTEER

Volunteer For Nextfest! June 5-15th.
Receive Free Festival Pass! For more information please contact Elisa @ 453-2440

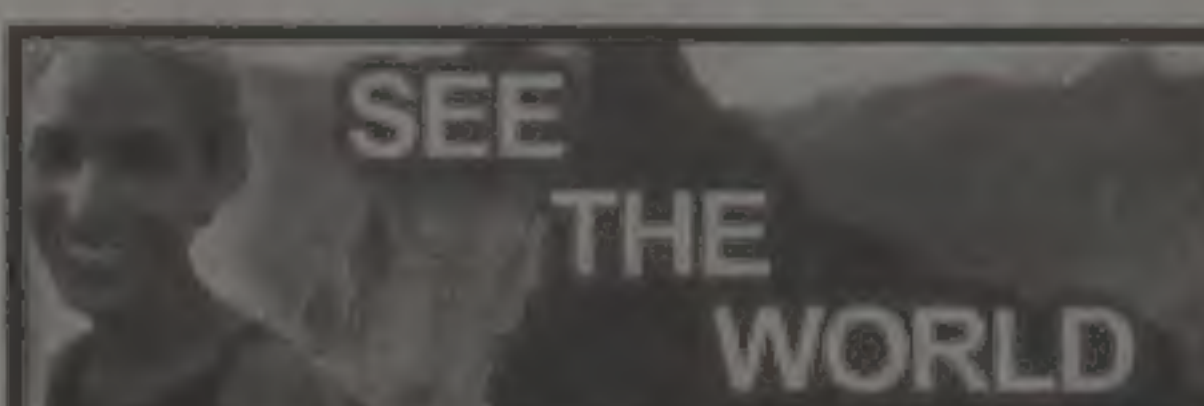
Volunteers needed to "make fun" at the Edmonton International Street Performers Festival (July 4-13). Apply online at www.edmontonstreetfest.com, email at volunteer@edmontonstreetfest.com, or call Liz at 425-5162. (volunteers must 14 yrs minimum)

Break the Code! Help and adult to read and write. Call Jordan Centre for Family Literacy 421-7323 www.familit.ca

Tandem Captains-Cycling with the Blind
Tandem Captains required. Please contact John Collier at 433-1270

Senior's Birthday Entertainment
Senior recreation/activity centre needs volunteer entertainers for monthly afternoon parties.
Weekday message Karen 780-468-1985 seesa.ca

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The Works Art & Design Festival wants volunteers, **June 28-July 2**. For info contact Volunteer Coordinator Caitlynn Cummings at 780-426-2122 ext. 230 or volunteer2@theworks.ca

Volunteers Needed to work with new immigrants in a variety of tasks and with some great fun events and outings! Many exciting shifts available! Call Judy 424-3545, ext 249

Volunteers Needed! to assist new immigrants on first time shopping trip for essentials. 2-3 hrs. occas. weekdays. Call Judy 424-3545, ext 249

Volunteers Needed! to help adult immigrants learn English. Shifts day/ eve., days/wknds, 3-4hrs/wk. No exp. req., various locations. Judy 424-3545, ext 249

Volunteers Needed! to help newcomer Somali children with homework. 2 Eves/wk. Northside location. Call Judy 424-3545, ext 249

Volunteers Needed to help new immigrants to Canada learn about Canadian customs and culture. Tues and Thurs June to August. Call Judy 424-3545, ext 249

Healthy volunteers required for research studies with the Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A. Call 407-3775 or 407-3221. Reimbursement will be provided

The Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A is seeking mayor depression sufferers who are interested in participating in a research study. Call 407-3906.

Committee looking for help with helping inner city music and arts festival. Have fun and gain great experience! Website hotcmf.com. Please call 758-9856 for more info

The Edmonton International Baseball Foundation is looking for volunteers to assist in the hosting of the IBAF World Junior AAA Baseball Championship (**July 25-Aug. 3**). Call the E.I.B.F. Tournament Office 498-2225

Join in the hottest new trend of personal history. Unique volunteer opportunity to develop your artistic and writing skills by helping to put together a collection of life history stories of Edmonton elders. Interviews have been conducted, we now need someone to assist with transcription, storywriting, and/or layout and design. 434-4747 ext 4 for info

Volunteer for the AGA and meet other art enthusiasts get a free membership after 30 hrs of volunteer work. get invitations to events and movies. For info contact Priscilla Wagar at 422-6223 or pwagar@artgalleryberta.com

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Second Chance Animal Rescue Society
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The Support Network: Volunteer today to be a Distress Line Listener. Apply on line at: www.the-supportnetwork.com or call 732-6648

Meals on Wheels, volunteer kitchen help and driving needed, weekdays 10am-1pm. Call 429-2020

Volunteers are needed for a U of A research study on the experiences of people who have been victims of identity theft (18+ yrs). Contact Dr. Jessica Van Vliet at 780-492-5894, E: IDTheftStudy@ualberta.ca

ElderCare provides day programs for seniors. Volunteers are needed to help with daily activities such as crafts, card games and socializing. Please call 434-4747 Ext. 4

Love Bingo? Volunteer for Elder Care. Bingo volunteers are needed to help raise funds for program meals and outings. Ph 434-4747, ext. 4

Exposure: Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival seeks steering committee volunteers. Visit www.exposurefestival.ca

Volunteer website for youth 14-24 years old. www.youthvolunteer.ca

Old Strathcona Youth Society: Looking for volunteers (21+) interested in working with high-risk youth drop-in setting. Naomi 496-5947, e-m: osyc@telus.net

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Caught between a rock and a hard place (that's what she said)

ADVICE ALT.SEX.COLUMN

DEAR ANDREA:
I'm confused. Are there any guys out there who aren't at the extremes as far as sex goes? My ex-boyfriend was completely obsessed. Not only did he want it four-plus times a day, he'd want to have phone sex at least twice a day when we were apart. I think of myself as a pretty sexual person, but even I have my limits. Plus phone sex was boring. I like to masturbate, but it's hard for me to orgasm when I feel the person on the end of the line is waiting. But, that's not why he's my ex. He was rather immature. He was so obsessed with sex, everything was sexual. If I said it was raining out. He'd say "Oooh sounds ... wet ...". If I said something was hard

(difficult) he'd say "Ooh, hard!" It was like that with everything! He was not some 20-year-old kid, either. He was 48! I'm 31 and I felt I was more mature than him. So, we broke up. Then I fell in love with his polar opposite. We've been together a couple years and our sex life has gone downhill rapidly, from two to three times a week to maybe once every three months. I've tried to initiate it, but I get nowhere. It only happens when he wants to. I really love this guy and I want to marry him. I just need to figure out how to find a happy medium.

LOVE, OPPOSITE DAY

DEAR DAY:

A happy medium in your case would require something like the matter-trans- porter machine from *The Fly*—you'd put Mr "Ooh, Sounds ... Wet" in one pod and Mr Every Three Months in the other and zap them back and forth in space until their DNA was well and truly

mixed. Ideally, you'd end up with a guy who wanted to do it about as often as you do, with some room in there for negotiation. Un-ideally, of course, you could make yourself a boyfriend who never wants to have sex but does like to make a whole lot of immature, sniggery jokes about it. On second thought, maybe this isn't the best plan.

The first guy sounds unbearable. I'm surprised you stuck it out with him as long (ooooh, long) as you did. It must have been hard to ... I mean you had to have been open to ... I mean on top of— oh, never mind. It must have been like living with Michael Scott with a few drinks in him: "That's what *she* said!" Awful. You have my sympathy.

The new guy is a harder nut (oh, shut up) to crack. Are you really as mystified as you sound as to where the sex has gone and why, or is there a chance that you do know what's up (shut up) with him but don't want to admit it? I don't

think it's abnormal to experience a drop-off after a few years, particularly, but four times a year is pretty slim pick- ings. As a mere stripling of 31 I would be very cautious, in your place, about signing any long-term contracts under those conditions. At the very least you ought to know what's going on with him (and with your relationship) before you agree to marry someone who frankly isn't going to satisfy you. It would be a different story if you were saying "We only do it every three months and we're both happy with that." I'd dance at your wedding then. The way you're talking about it though, I'd feel more like I was dancing on your marriage's grave and while I've always liked Nick Cave and stuff I'm just not that Goth. Sorry. It ain't going to work.

You're going to have to have one of those sit-downs that nobody wants but nearly everybody needs at some point. This is no time to ask him what's wrong

with him or to suggest that maybe he's just not man enough for you, not if you actually like him, anyway. It is time to find out what's going on with him all those times you initiate and you "get nowhere." Is it possible he's missing your cues? Is there a better time or a better approach? A different act? If no, no, no and no and this is just who he is, a guy who's interested in sex four times a year and anything extra just seems unnecessary or unappealing, then you're going to have to figure out if there's some way you can get your itches scratched. Maybe he'd be happy just holding you while you take care of things for yourself. Maybe he'd be OK if you had a "friend." Maybe he needs a check-up and a meds adjustment and all will be well after that. You're going to have to find out, is all. I don't care if it's hard. And that's not what she said, or so I hear.

LOVE, ANDREA

VOLUNTEER

Community Options Society/Board Recruiting 2008-2009: Community Options, a Society for Children & Families, is a non-profit Society, which has provided services to children and their families in Member, E: debhuber@shaw.ca / T: 637-6156

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IS DRINKING A PROBLEM?

VUEWEEKLY

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- the winner must be 18 or older.
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- Vue Weekly reserves the right to exclude anyone from our contests.
- no staff, sponsors or members of their immediate families may enter
- the personal information of those who enter will not be sold but may be provided to contest sponsors.
- the chances of winning depend on the number of entries received.
- by entering, entrants consent to the use of their names by Vue Weekly for publicity.
- Vue Weekly is not responsible for prizes unclaimed after 15 days.

Park are looking for volunteer experienced cyclists to help with this course. Thu evenings until June 12, Sept. 4-Oct. 16. John at jbcollier@shaw.ca

P.A.L.S. Project Adult Literacy Society are looking for volunteer tutors to work with adult students in the Math Literacy Program. For info Ph 424-5514

E.C.A.W.A.R. (EDMONTON COALITION AGAINST WAR AND RACISM) Volunteers welcome. www.wage-peace.com for info/contacts, Ph 988-2713

A call for volunteers - Action for Healthy Communities: Questions about AHC philosophy & programs? 944-4687 Visit: www.a4hc.ca

Volunteer Overseas with Canadian Crossroads International: human rights, community economic development, and HIV/AIDS education, prevention, care. www.cciorg.ca

YEAR ROUND ON-LINE AUCTION for Alberta Easter Seals. Donate items, bid, have a great time! Carmen 429-0137 x233. http://auction.edmonton24hourrelay.com

CANADIAN LIVER FOUNDATION is looking for enthusiastic volunteers for presentations and special events. Call Carmen at 444-1547

P.A.L.S. Project Adult Literacy Society are looking for volunteer tutors to work with adult students in the ESL - English as a Second Language program. Training and materials provided. Contact 424-5514

Do you know what a Volunteer Driver is? It's a community member who can spare 3-4 hours once a month to drive a senior. Call Bev 732-1221

Do you love art and people? Then the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts can use you! Come show off your talents. www.ninahaggertyart.ca; email: info@nina-haggertyart.ca or call 474-7611

CNIB is looking for volunteers with vision. adults (50+) to help seniors with vision loss. For more info call Catherine 453-8304

Become a friend to a new Canadian and share a life-changing experience. Contact Dulan at 474-9554

Food Not Bombs Looking for people to help out with cooking and serving of meals every Sunday. Ph 904-8751 or e-m: foodnotbombsedmonton@hotmail.com

Become a distress line volunteer. The Support Network, 732-6648. www.thesupportnetwork.com

Volunteer teachers needed to teach English as a second language to newcomers to Canada. Orientation and training provided. Meet people from all around the world. Jason: jmarkowsky@cci-lex.ca or 944-0792

The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton needs volunteers to take calls on our 24-hour Crisis line. For information ph 423-4102

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SACE—Public Education Program: Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (www.sace.ab.ca) provides crisis intervention, information, counseling, public education services. For a customized presentation T: 423-4102/F: 421-8734/E: info@sace.ab.ca; www.sace.ab.ca/24 Hour Crisis Line: 423-4121

Canadian Mental Health Association. www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca Education Program is pleased to offer workshops to give you the skills to intervene with people who may be at risk for suicide. Follow the links to ASSIST or call 414-6300

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